DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 840 PS 031 038

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TITLE	Early Childhood Indicators.
INSTITUTION	Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Haydenville, MA.
SPONS AGENCY	Bernard Van Leer Foundation, The Hague (Netherlands).; Christian Children's Fund Inc., Richmond, VA.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	133p.; Journal is subtitled: "An International Resource for Early Childhood Development." The Coordinators' Notebook is published twice annually. Additional support provided by the Aga Khan Foundation, Save the Children Alliance, UNESCO, and UNICEF.
AVAILABLE FROM	For subscription information: CGECCD Secretariat, Ryerson University, School of Early Childhood Education, 350 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3, Canada. Tel: 416-979-5000; Fax: 416-979-5239; e-mail: info@ecdgroup.com; Web site: http://www.ecdgroup.com.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Coordinator's Notebook; n25 2001
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; Case Studies; Child Development; Child Health; Developing Nations; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Quality; Enrollment; Financial Support; Foreign Countries; Outcomes of Education; Parent Background; Parent Education; Program Costs; Public Policy; School Readiness; *Social Indicators; *Young Children
IDENTIFIERS	Colombia; Early Childhood Development Programs; *Indicators; Jamaica; Namibia; Nepal; Philippines; UNESCO

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the need to identify the level, nature, and impact of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programs on children and their families, this theme issue of "Coordinators' Notebook" seeks to complement and further the international efforts at collecting information on ECCD for use at national and international levels. Following the introduction, a review article, "In Search of Early Childhood Indicators" (Robert G. Myers), outlines some of the general questions about indicators, with special reference to ECCD indicators, and offers 16 possible indicators for debate, strongly emphasizing that these need to be critically reviewed across different settings. The indicators are organized in the following categories: (1) coverage, access, and use; (2) program quality; (3) political will as shown in policy and financing; (4) costs and expenditures; and (5) status of or effects on children and parents. A second article summarizes activities of the Consultative Group on ECCD related to indicator development: a review of instruments and measures, construction of a child development profile, and a search for ECCD indicators in five countries. The findings of these five national-level case studies, conducted in collaboration with the Consultative Group on ECCD on the review and development of ECCD indicators, are then presented for Namibia, Nepal, Jamaica, Philippines, and Colombia. The work on reviewing, development, and sometimes field-testing indicators provides a platform for useful discussions around ECCD. Case studies highlight the need to build capacities within countries to enable them to carry out the development of appropriate

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indicators at country/sub-country levels. The journal's regular feature, "Network Notes," reports on activities, meetings, and the calendar of the Secretariat and of the Partners of the Consultative Group on ECCD. (KB)

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ED 473 840

Early Childhood Indicators. Coordinators' Notebook, No. 25, 2001.

Kathy Bartlett and Louise Zimanyi

Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

2001

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The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

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Introduction

Kathy Bartlett and Louise Zimanyi

What do we know about the level, nature, and impact of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes on children (and their families)? Can policymakers adequately assess the situation of young children (their well-being, level of risk, readiness to learn, etc.) with the current information and monitoring processes that are in place across countries-especially those in the Majority World?[1] What do different practitioners feel is important and relevant when it comes to understanding the effects of their work?

For the Education for All's end of decade review of the efforts taking place around the world there was a concerted effort to assess what had been achieved. Part of the review included countries "taking stock" of the selected indicators for education chosen to address the different areas, from early childhood education and development to primary and secondary education to adult literacy. The results of this review were mixed, in part because there was no initial baseline information on some of the indicators used. In addition, there were difficulties because not all countries collected the same data for the agreed-upon indicators (due to interpretation, availability of some, but not all, data, etc). The difficulty of collecting international data on specific indicators related to education across a huge range of contexts, languages, and cultures (within and across countries) should not be underestimated.

The two early childhood indicators chosen for this international level synthesis were in the end problematic because, for example, they were interpreted and used differently across countries. The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CGECCD)-a consortium of concerned donor agencies, foundations, and international NGOs working in collaboration with

regional ECCD networks made up of ECCD programmers, planners, trainers, researchers, and NGOs-has been exploring and reviewing the area of indicators for some time. In addition to CG related work on indicators, UNICEF, UNESCO, OECD, the World Bank, and the High/Scope Foundation are carrying out interesting initiatives. Each takes a different perspective which we think is useful for encouraging a wider debate on the development and use of ECCD Indicators.

This issue of the *Coordinators' Notebook* seeks to complement and further the international efforts at collecting information on ECCD for use at national and international levels. Robert Myers' review article outlines some of the general questions about indicators, with special reference to indicators of ECCD. Amongst the previous and ongoing attempts described is the recent work done for the end of decade review of EFA (see www.unesco.org). Myers also offers sixteen possible indicators for debate, strongly emphasizing that these need to be critically reviewed, and adapted or rejected across the different settings. This overview of indicators was shared with the five country groups (Namibia, Nepal, Jamaica, Philippines, and Colombia) involved in a Consultative Group initiative in which each carried out national-level case studies on the review and development of ECCD indicators for their individual contexts.

The CGECCD regional coordinator in each area worked with others to draw together a range of key "stakeholders" to form a core working group to undertake the work of identification, development, and, in some cases, piloting of country-specific early childhood indicators.

The work on reviewing, developing, and sometimes field-testing indicators helped to provide a platform for useful discussions/debates around ECCD (including across fields, such as health, education, and social welfare, as well as across stakeholders, such as government and civil society. The case study work also highlighted the need to build capacities within countries to enable them to carry out the development of appropriate indicators at country/sub-country levels, and it also highlighted critical issues (i.e., HIV/AIDs in Namibia) which required attention and work.

Some other key insights that emerged include:

- The process of arriving at the indicators to be used was and is as important as the particular indicators that were/are created.
- Country information systems are at different stages and therefore work at the country level will need to take into consideration the particular circumstances of that country.
- Arriving at agreement about instruments that purport to measure "child development" continues to be a contentious and difficult process. However, there was overall agreement about the value of defining indicators locally, trying to respect cultural differences, differences in conditions, and differences in histories.
- In general, the process of moving from describing what information is available to bringing about changes that are needed in the collection and use of information is a long one and requires a more sustained effort than can be generated through the process set in motion by the project. If the process is to work in the field, the measurement instruments must be validated, and mechanisms need to be in place to assure the reliable application of instruments. And, finally, any system of indicators should be "user-friendly" so that

those involved in monitoring will be motivated and able to incorporate results into their thinking and planning.

The CG is hoping to undertake additional case studies across a wider range of countries/regions and also possibly to do further work in some or all of the five original case study countries. This would enable the national-level, cross-sector and stakeholder groups formed for this work to continue to meet and strengthen their work, encourage further implementation and testing of the indicators, and advocate for changes in policies and programmes. Where possible and applicable, the new case studies will include the development and review of possible indicators relevant to the specific "flagship" efforts of the Dakar EFA follow-up, including ensuring discussion around HIV/AIDS, health and nutrition, and girl's education. Feedback from colleagues in the Philippines and Jamaica, for example, suggest there is considerable interest by other countries in their regions to carry out work on developing ECCD indicators for their specific contexts.

It would also be useful to tie in more coherently the many initiatives related to work on indicators by facilitating opportunities/meetings to share experiences and strategies, and to suggest ways forward.

In closing, we would be interested in receiving your feedback and comments on the articles and case studies presented, in addition to telling us about what work is being done in your country or region, your priorities, and the challenges you face. See our contact information for email and mailing address. After May 2001, please see the "Forum" section on our newly designed and updated website (www.ecdgroup.com) to add your thoughts and experiences on this important topic.

We would like to acknowledge and thank UNICEF and the Bernard van Leer Foundation for their support, as well as the commitment and support from within each country that was provided by NGOs, governments, our regional colleagues, and by other participants.

1 We use the term Majority World to refer to those countries that are often referred to as South countries, developing, or third world countries. We feel the term Majority World is more accurate and neutral. The term is also used to remind us that the majority of the world's children are at risk of delayed or debilitated development.

IN SEARCH OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INDICATORS

Robert G. Myers

Secretariat of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development[1]

The creation and use of indicators to monitor social change continues to be in vogue.[2] Most reports of international organisations include, usually at the end, a set of tidy tables presenting neatly arrayed numbers purporting to represent the status of countries along a variety of demographic, economic, social, and sometimes political dimensions. These numbers will usually be drawn upon in the body of the report as a means to compare countries, to comment on trends, to describe progress, gaps, and lags, and to suggest policy and programme directions. National planning offices, chief executives, health ministers, evaluation units, and others call for and use diverse social indicators, often as much to justify or sell programmes as to monitor them. Most project evaluation schemes explicitly include the creation of indicators against which progress may be defined.

The particular dimensions of economic or social welfare addressed in any report will depend on the mandate and the interests of the reporting organisation. The area that most interests the CG is the welfare of children during their early years, an area that says a great deal about the general welfare of a nation or population. In this article, we will focus on the creation and use of indicators of early childhood care and development (ECCD) seen in terms of: 1) the general status of children during the early years of life (birth to six); 2) the extension and quality of programme initiatives intended to improve that status; and more generally, 3) the quality of the contexts that affect child development.

One of the main motivations for taking up the topic of ECCD indicators at this time in the *Coordinators' Notebook* derives from our dissatisfaction with the ECCD indicators defined in and used as part of the Year 2000 Assessment of Education for All. Many readers will know that in March of 1990 the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, approved a Declaration that included the following statement: "Learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programmes, as appropriate" (Article 5). The Framework for Action also set the following as one of the targets to be considered in national plans of action for the 1990s: "Expansion of early childhood care and development activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children" (Article 5, paragraph 8).[3]

At the World Conference in 1990 no specific indicators were fixed to guide the international community in monitoring progress toward this target. Nor were specific ECCD indicators assigned when this target was incorporated into the deliberations and outcomes of the World Summit on Children, held in September 1990. One of the summit's goals was to achieve agreement among world leaders about how to proceed with activities which would realise the

provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Nevertheless, at the end of the decade and as an input into discussions at the ten-year follow-up meeting of the World Forum held in Dakar in April 2000, countries were asked to assess their progress toward the goal, along with progress toward other goals agreed upon in Jomtien.

As will be evident from the discussion that follows, that exercise, while representing an advance in that it put ECCD firmly on the agenda, was also limited and flawed. Reading the country reports which were produced as part of the assessment has led us to question both the particular indicators used and the way in which they are used internationally. The exercise showed both the potential value of ECCD indicators and the need for much more concerted attention to developing and incorporating such indicators into standard reporting systems. It has led us to ask how we might do better in creating and using indicators for monitoring at both international and (especially) national levels.

As we reflect on the process of developing and using ECCD indicators, our specific purposes in this article are to:

- Help clarify what indicators are (or could be) and how they are (or might be) used as a contribution to improving how they are selected and used for ECCD programmers and practitioners, particularly at national levels;
- alert readers to some of the pitfalls of, as well as the potential value associated with, indicators that are commonly used to monitor early childhood care and development;
- outline one process that might be followed for selecting, operationalising, and using ECCD indicators to monitor the developmental status of programmes and of children at national or sub-national levels; and
- suggest some possible indicators as a basis for discussion.

Accordingly, the article is divided into four sections. We begin by trying to answer some general questions about indicators, with special reference to indicators of ECCD. This is followed by a brief overview of previous and ongoing attempts to define and apply ECCD indicators, including a discussion of the treatment of indicators in the EFA Year 2000 evaluation. Section three will suggest a process for choosing and operationalising indicators that are meaningful in particular national contexts. The closing section will set out a set of sixteen possible indicators that might be taken as a starting point for discussion.

One final point of clarification in this introduction: although we have taken international reports and indicators (and particularly the Year 2000 Assessment) as a starting point for discussion, our real focus is on creating and using indicators at the national level. Indeed, we will argue that, while international indicators are potentially useful at a very general level, they can also be misused and misleading. We will also argue that to some extent these international indicators subvert or distract efforts to arrive at more useful indicators that might have greater significance for national policy and programming than those presently favoured.

Some Questions about Indicators

- What is an indicator?

The definition that guides the process of establishing and using indicators can vary widely. Consider the following possible definitions:

- According to Webster's Dictionary, an indicator is, "A person or thing that indicates." To "indicate" means, variously, "to point out, to direct attention to, to be given a sign or token, to signify, to show the need for."

- "Indicators are qualitative descriptions of social conditions intended to inform public opinion and national policy making. These delineate social states, define social problems and trace social trends which, by social engineering, may hopefully be guided towards social goals, formulated by social planning." (Duncan 1974, quoted in M.S. Swaminathan Foundation, 1)

- "In simple language, an indicator could be termed an evidence that something has happened, or that an objective has been achieved." (M.S. Swaminathan Foundation 2000, 6)

- "An indicator characterises some important feature of a system or activity that can be used to monitor or evaluate "progress" or "success." Thus, an indicator serves an evaluative purpose. This contrasts with a descriptive purpose served by a statistic. Statistics are converted into indicators when they are related to goals or to some explicit definition of progress or success. Because indicators are inherently evaluative, standards or value judgements about what is right and good need to be agreed upon and made explicit in order for the indicators to have meaning." (Consultative Group 1999, 5)

- "An indicator is a specific behaviour or result that one can use as a marker to point out how ell objectives are being achieved." (Evans et al. 2000, 278)

The variation in definitions makes it clear that establishing the particular purpose(s) indicators are supposed to serve, and that making explicit the definitions of standards or values or objectives that are to be applied when creating and interpreting an indicator, must be at the heart of the discussion of indicators. This brings us to our next question, why do we want to point something out, show need, or give significance?

- What purposes do indicators serve?

> *"The process of monitoring remains important for informing policy and allocating available resources efficiently. Similarly, comparisons between nations remain useful- both to show what can be achieved through the pursuit of different policies and priorities, and to act as a spur to national pride and performance." (Adamson 1996)*

From this general statement, at least three purposes can be identified that affect the kind of indicator(s) to be chosen.

ADVOCACY One purpose of indicators is to mobilise social and political support for action-to provide a "spur to national pride and performance" (Adamson 1996). Using indicators to describe gaps or lags, relative to other countries or to some absolute standard, helps advocates to build a case for action and, hopefully, helps to spur national pride leading to action .

POLICY ANALYSIS Indicators serving a policy purpose may appear at international, national, or sub-national levels. At all levels, disaggregation of the indicators helps to identify levels of success or gaps in relation to the characteristics of programmes (e.g., geographical or administrative

distribution, gender, economic conditions, ethnic groupings, etc.) that have implications for policy. This use of indicators, while permitting analysis at a level that "informs policy," and perhaps also guiding the efficient allocation of available resources, stops short of seeking explanations. The ECCD indicators which serve policy purposes might pertain to children's development or might serve to characterise their environments.

When determining what indicators we would use for monitoring early childhood development, we usually do not start from a research perspective that tries to explain why agreed-upon standards have or have not been met. This said, however, there is no reason that the same indicators chosen to monitor "success" for various groups or other sub-divisions of a population cannot be applied within an evaluation or research framework to try and find out why the level of success varies for different groups; this double usage would lead to obvious implications for policy.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING In this case, the purpose of indicators is to help administrators see if a particular system, programme, or institution functions in the way it is expected to function-if it is operating as planned and achieving set goals. These indicators, often set out as part of a "Management Information System," are more specifically tuned to assure the efficient allocation of available resources within programmes or projects; they provide an alert system in terms of criteria that are specific to the system. Typically, such indicators focus on inputs and processes and are less likely to be concerned with outputs and impacts. Again, indicators used for administrative purposes normally do not provide an answer to why a system may be functioning well or poorly; they simply alert us to the fact that this is happening.

Although there may be overlaps in the indicators used for these three purposes, it is also evident that different purposes and contexts will also require different indicators. For instance, while it may be useful at an international level and for policy purposes to compare enrolment ratios, this may not be sufficient for policy analysis in a particular national setting. National enrolment ratios may be at or near 100 percent, in which case the problem at the national policy level may be more qualitative than quantitative, requiring other indicators. Or, whereas an advocate may want to know whether a certain level of funding has been allocated to early childhood development programmes, an administrator will be more concerned with indicators that show whether funds have been spent for the purposes designated, independently of the amount of total resources assigned.

The emphasis in this article is primarily on indicators related to advocacy and policy rather than on administrative monitoring.

■ Within what sort of framework should we consider indicators?

ECCD is being pursued within a variety of social and theoretical frameworks, each with a different focus and each suggesting different priorities to be taken into consideration when searching for the most appropriate indicators. For instance, an approach to ECCD within a framework of children's rights and in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child will probably yield a different set of indicators than an approach to ECCD set within, let us say, a poverty reduction framework or a framework of preparing children better for school. A child rights advocate may be concerned with whether or not a child's right to a name is being honoured, whereas a framework which focuses on preparation for school might rely on an

indicator of cognitive development at the point of entry into school. In contrast, a broad human development approach might incorporate indicators of the values a child is developing. From a theoretical perspective, an ecological framework for examining early childhood development which considers the environments in which the child develops that are thought to be crucial to development, will, in all probability, yield different indicators from a framework that focuses more exclusively on the evolving psychological and social condition of a child. In brief, there is no "right" framework.

- What should ECCD indicators tell us?

One way of classifying what indicators should tell us has been provided by Windham (1992) in a document produced for UNICEF,[4] who suggests that, in general, we would like indicators to tell us something about changes in the following:

- Context (e.g., Gross Domestic Product, income distribution, population size, availability of health services, communications media, longevity, general educational attainment of the population).
- Financial capacity and will to support programmes (social expenditures, percentage of budgets devoted to various sectors and programmes).
- Effort put forth (enrolment ratios and growth, indicators of quality such as adult/child ratios, certification levels).
- Efficiency (cost per participant or graduate, graduates as percentage of those who began, etc.).
- Effects (developmental indicators, "achievement," values, and attitudes).
- Social well-being (mortality rates, literacy rates, delinquency levels).

For the most part, contextual indicators have been established and are included in a wide range of existing international and national reports. Changes in these contextual variables should bring about changes in early childhood development that result from the interaction of the young child with his or her environment. Most of the contextual indicators used are very broad and sweeping, rarely looking at the quality of the particular learning environments of children and rarely looking at differences in contexts within a national context.

Indicators of the financial capacity and will to support social programmes are less frequently found. When the indicators are linked to budgets rather than to expenditures, they are essentially statements of political will expressed in the formulation of budgets. Often figures for programmes directed to young children are either very dispersed (among health, family welfare, education, etc.) or they are folded into larger categories (for example, pre-primary is often reported together with primary), making it difficult to see what support is being provided, and where.

Most indicators concentrate on what Windham calls effort, as represented by indicators of the coverage and quality of programmes. Indicators of ECCD programme effects are not commonly found in either international or national reports.

Efficiency indicators such as "cost per child" are not commonly included among ECCD indicators and when included they are often extremely rough measures. Indicators of social well-being are common, however their connections to the programmes it is assumed they help is weak. An indicator such as the mortality rate is presumably both an indicator of programme effects and of social well-being. If an indicator of the developmental status of children were to be accepted as part of a general monitoring scheme, it could also fall in both categories.

Another way of classifying what indicators should tell us could be thought of as: 1) the general conditions of the environments that affect both the status of children and the potential effectiveness of programmes (knowledge and practices in families and communities, sanitation, the availability of food, access to services, etc.); 2) the status of programmes to improve the situation of children (coverage and quality); and 3) the condition of children (health, nutritional status and psychosocial development, education, employment in later life).

THE STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH A CHILD DEVELOPS This category of indicators includes the kinds of indicators mentioned by Windham. However, it can also include indicators of conditions within families, such the knowledge a family has about child development and childrearing practices. Indicators may also be created for such environmental conditions as sanitation or the availability of food or access to services.

THE STATUS OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES Indicators of the access to programmes and of the way in which they function can be framed in terms of monitoring the inputs to the process (are the inputs we think are essential to operating the programme in place?), the processes being used (are we doing a good job of providing children with what is deemed essential to their overall development?), and the results expected (has the system expanded as we expected, and are we having the effect that we think we should have on, for example, attitudes, competencies, and behaviours of those operating the system or the condition of participants in the programme?). Too often "results" are indicated simply by some measure of expanding the coverage of programmes. This does not tell us anything about the quality of the programme or, more importantly, about whether children's conditions are improving as a result of the programme.

THE CONDITION OF CHILDREN The present indicators used to describe the condition of children tend to focus on death rates and/or on a child's physical state; the indicators that are most widely used are the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and the Child Mortality Rate (CMR). Other widely accepted and reported indicators include Low Birth Weight (LBW) and several nutritional indicators (combinations of height, weight and age, arm circumference, various measures of vitamin and mineral deficiencies). These are mainly applied to children under three years of age. These indicators have functioned effectively to describe the physical and survival problems faced by young children to select groups for interventions, and to evaluate programme outcomes.

When we move beyond considering survival and physical growth to considering early childhood development in all of its dimensions, we do not find the widespread acceptance and use of indicators that we do for survival and physical growth. Indicators of the mental, social, and emotional development of children are seldom agreed upon, are rarely used to describe a population, and are seldom considered by programme people when making educational (or other) decisions affecting young children. This state of affairs is not due to a lack of tests or measures. On the contrary, there are hundreds of early childhood tests or measures, which address different dimensions of development. However, these measures have not been

adequately assessed to see which are properly adapted to local circumstances and which are reliable, valid, and normed. We will return to this theme later on.

■ Should indicators be set at an international, national, or sub-national level?

This question is related to the above discussion of purposes. Is the main purpose of an indicator to provide international comparison or is it to be used nationally to assess policy? A problem with the use of indicators that must meet the test of international comparison is that internationally comparative indicators are extremely rough. Their highly aggregated nature may hide more than they reveal. Because they apply to different contexts and to different systems they must be extremely general.

There are, it seems, general indicators that have meaning and can be compared internationally. For instance, a general indicator of context, such as income distribution represented by the percentage of the wealth of a country controlled by the upper ten or twenty percent of the population, can be meaningful if this is tracked over time. Infant mortality is another such indicator: death is death wherever it occurs.[5] However an indicator such as a preschool enrolment ratio may have to be interpreted with caution and supplemented (see below) because it is often constructed from data pertaining to very different kinds of educational systems.

■ How should indicators be interpreted?

Should indicators be interpreted against a fixed and absolute standard or should the interpretation be relative and focus on improvements? In order to answer this question it is useful to consider some lessons from the field of nutrition. One widely accepted international indicator for nutrition is Weight for Age. When the growth charts based on Weight for Age were first introduced as a means of monitoring the nutritional status of children, they were divided into red, yellow, and green sections, according to an international nutritional norm. The interpretation of "success" was made in terms of the number of children found in the green area of the chart, with "normality" set according to international norms. Later, national norms were created in many places, affecting the percentage of children reported as "malnourished" and creating problems for international comparison because national standards varied.

Another adjustment made in interpreting the charts was at the level of measuring the status of individual children. The focus shifted from classifying a child according to the absolute level of the indicator at one moment in time and according to some absolute standard (whether in the green or yellow, or whether at a certain weight for age) to classifying a child in terms of whether or not improvement or loss had occurred in the indicator between weighing periods. This kind of indicator (of improvement) has not been elevated to national levels, and although *The Progress of Nations*, published by Unicef, has made an effort in this direction, change over time is seldom used as an international standard. Finally, another sort of adjustment was made in the nutrition field by adding indicators of micro-nutrients to the mix, moving beyond the earlier concentration on protein-energy malnutrition.

Recalling the experience with nutritional indicators is useful for several reasons as we consider indicators for early childhood development. First, the nutritional indicators applied are indicators of the status of children, not of coverage or of participation in a particular programme. Second, agreement to use certain indicators was achieved in spite of real and continuing differences.

Third, adjustments have been made over time that have moved the indicators toward national rather than international norms. Fourth, multiple indicators are being applied. Finally, the idea of stressing "improvement" rather than taking a fixed standard has been introduced.

- How does one deal with multiple goals and purposes?

An indicator usually presents information about one aspect of a system or activity related to some particular goal. However, systems and activities typically have multiple goals. This means that a set of indicators is needed to effectively monitor the progress of most activities. If we are to monitor early childhood care and development programmes, several goals come into play. And, if ECCD is to be viewed in an integral way, something more is needed than individual indicators for components of ECCD. This considerably complicates the search for ECCD indicators. One possible way of accommodating this when searching for indicators of the status of children is to think in terms of a profile which would describe children at the age of entry into primary school and represent a result of all that has influenced a child' s development before entering school. This profile can also serve as a baseline for monitoring progress and performance in primary school.

Experiences with Defining and Applying ECCD Indicators

Since the Jomtien Conference, many efforts have been made to define and/or present statistics and indicators that should guide the monitoring and assessment process for early childhood. Examining several of these efforts that have taken place with assistance from different international organisations will help us provide some insights into the difficulties involved in framing such indicators. Additional information about some of these initiatives and about others will be included in other sections of the *Notebook*.

UNICEF

- A framework, manual and plan for EFA indicators (Windham 1992)

This framework, produced by Windham, has been discussed above. To date, this framework has not been applied to monitoring ECCD. Parts of the framework were appropriated for the Year 2000 Assessment of EFA.

- Monitoring System

UNICEF has developed and applied a system to be used to monitor the status of children. This system, however, lacks indicators related to the psychosocial development of young children.

- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

In 1998, UNICEF embarked on a process of helping countries assess progress for children at end-decade in relation to the World Summit for Children goals (New York, 1990). The list of global indicators being used to assess progress at end-decade was developed through extensive consultation, both within UNICEF, and with WHO, UNESCO and the ILO (see website, www.childinfo.org for a link to this information).

There are numerous sources of data for measuring progress at country levels, but many either do not function well enough to give current and quality data, or they do not provide the data required for assessing progress. Household surveys are capable of filling many of these data gaps.

The mid-decade assessment led to the collection of data by 100 countries using the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), household surveys developed to obtain specific mid-decade data or via MICS questionnaire modules carried by other surveys. By 1996, 60 developing countries had carried out stand-alone MICS, and another 40 had incorporated some of the MICS modules into other surveys. The mid-decade questionnaire and manual, a list of the countries where a stand-alone MICS was implemented, and a selection of country reports are available on the website.

The end-decade MICS questionnaire and manual have been developed specifically to obtain the data for 63 of the 75 end-decade indicators in over 50 countries where statistics are generally weak. These draw heavily on experiences with the mid-decade MICS and subsequent MICS evaluation and are also available on the website.

In terms of childcare and early education, there are three questions asked: one on preschool enrolment of 5-year-olds, a second on whether or not 3- and 4-year-olds attend some sort of organised programme of care or education outside the home, and the third, directed toward the cases in which the family has 3- and 4-year-olds in some programme, asks the number of hours during the week they were in the programme. The CGECCD is hoping to analyse this data, pull together information in the reports and databases, and perform some further analyses. It will then compare results with the statistics provided as part of the EFA 2000 Evaluation in order to come to some conclusions about what the data says as well as about what might be useful in future MICs, and, finally, to recommend additional indicators.

For more information, including manuals, questionnaires, and a background article, see: www.childinfo.org

UNESCO

- World Survey of Education and World Education Report

UNESCO publishes periodic enrolment statistics describing "pre-primary education" in the World Survey of Education (1971). These become "indicators" of the progress of specific countries when it is assumed that 100% coverage is the ideal or when coverage of one country is compared with that of others. (This indicator can be found at the back of the World Education Report issued approximately every two years.) UNESCO is in the process of redefining their process of collecting pre-primary information which, at the moment, is limited to formally organised programmes and to the three-five age group. (See discussion of enrolment indicators below in relation to the Year 2000 Assessment.)

- Early Childhood Care and Education: Basic Indicators on Young Children (1995)

In this UNESCO document, the indicators presented were divided into four categories, as follows:

CATEGORY	BASIC INDICATORS
The young child	*Children under 5 (absolute number)*
	Under 5 mortality rate
	Malnourished children under 5 (%)
The family	*Literacy rate for men (%)*
	Literacy rate for women (%)
	Total fertility rate (per woman)
Community	*GNP per capita (US$)*
	Access to health care services (%)
	Access to safe water (%)
Pre-primary education	*Pre-primary age group*
	Pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (%)

In the first category, the indicators listed in relation to the status of the young child are population, survival, and growth; a developmental indicator is not included. The pre-primary education category has two parts, the first of which is not really an indicator but is, rather, a specification of the age range for which the gross enrolment ratios are reported.

In this internationally presented set of indicators there is no "effects" indicator for child care and education, nor are there financial indicators. There are several contextual or environmental indicators (categories 3 and 4). We will discuss below why the "effort" indicator used-the gross enrolment ratio-should not be used as currently presented for comparisons across countries.

UNESCO'S PILOT PROGRAMME ON EARLY CHILDHOOD INDICATORS

At UNESCO's 30th General Conference in 1999, a resolution was approved to bring about an improvement in early childhood indicators. To implement the resolution, the Early Childhood and Family Education Section is initiating a mid-term pilot programme on early childhood indicators, in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The pilot programme aims to improve and develop policy-related and cross-nationally comparable early childhood indicators. More specifically, it is concerned with the improvement of data on non-pre-primary early childhood programmes.6 This orientation stems from the following observation:

Early childhood data collected by the countries' education ministries are mostly focused on what has been defined by the International Standard Classification of Education, or ISCED, as pre-primary education (ISCED Level 0). But pre-primary education constitutes only a fraction of

early childhood programmes, and the definition shows considerable conceptual gaps relative to early childhood programmes as understood by the professional community and implemented and practiced in the field.

For instance, ISCED-0 focuses on educationally-oriented programmes, while most early childhood programmes in developing countries contain, either exclusively or inclusively, care components for the child's physical growth and nutritional well-being. Secondly, while pre-primary education refers to programmes organised and provided in school or centre settings, a large volume of early childhood programmes are delivered in non-formal or informal modes. Third, pre-primary education, in principle, is to be provided by teaching staff with pedagogical qualifications, whereas in child development, parents play equal if not more important roles than teachers. Fourth, pre-primary education is characterised by its educational aims, but the benefits of early childhood programmes are more diverse, including not only enhanced educational efficiency, but also greater social justice and economic productivity. And finally, the minimum age for pre-primary education is set to be at least three years, except where children aged two are accepted, even though the Jomtien Declaration of Education for All states that learning begins at birth.

The gaps are considerable, but they should not be blamed on ISCED-0, which is not defined to cover the gamut of early childhood programmes. Therefore, the lack of non-pre-primary data should not be viewed in light of the strength or weakness of ISCED-0 per se. The gaps exist simply because of a lack of operational guidelines to direct the collection of reliable and meaningful data on non-pre-primary programmes. And it is this excluded component of early childhood programmes that requires the most urgent conceptual and operational improvements.

The UNESCO pilot programme on early childhood indicators proposes to address this defect by recognising both education and care activities for the child's holistic, integrated learning and development process, starting from birth and encompassing more than pre-primary education. Most important, if the expanded view of basic education is to be respected and realised at all, both formal and non-formal data must be included in governmental education data. The challenge is to conceptualise the excluded component of early childhood programmes. Clearly, this endeavour should be undertaken at the national level, with varying situations and needs specific to individual countries taken into account.

As for immediate objectives, the pilot programme does not intend to search for new categories of early childhood indicators or judge the validity or feasibility of various existing indicators. The indicators covered by the pilot countries will constitute the baseline corpus and efforts will be concentrated on expanding the data coverage for these existing indicators. And, if possible in terms of national capacity, and necessary in terms of national needs, an additional effort will be made to develop new indicators. With regard to data collection channels and methodologies, the pilot programme will respect existing practices in the pilot countries, and a new survey or data collection template would be introduced only if the existing data collection mechanism does not collect the type of data required. What is implied is that the programme does not attempt, at least in this pilot stage, to change or alter the technical framework or the administrative infrastructure for collecting early childhood data. This orientation reflects a conviction that the urgent development of an operational definition of early childhood programmes encompassing both pre-

primary and non-pre-primary components is necessary prior to a launching of technical and administrative efforts to improve early childhood indicators.

The programme is aimed at producing operational guidelines to include the following elements:

- Definition and conceptual clarification of early childhood programmes;
- Identification of key early childhood policy indicators;
- Specification of the data required to produce the identified early childhood indicators; and
- Technical instruction on the collection, analysis, interpretation, dissemination and utilisation of early childhood data.

The key result will be a prototype operational definition of early childhood programmes covering both pre-primary and non-pre-primary components. It will be based on conceptual as well as operational common denominators extracted from varying definitions and programmes inventoried in the pilot countries. The definition is expected to enable cross-national comparison of data collected according to the guidelines, at least among the participating pilot countries. If the initial result proves encouraging, the guidelines will be applied to more countries in the next phase before proceeding to testing on a regional and eventually global scale.

The work plan of the programme is being finalized7 and implementation will begin this autumn in five pilot countries selected from the Asia-Pacific region. An advisory group of experts will oversee the core conceptualisation process at the global level. Efforts will be made to muster inter-agency cooperation with colleagues from the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, the OECD, UNICEF, and the World Bank, who have met to discuss the issue this year in Washington, DC and Paris, as well as with those from other agencies.

UNICEF-UNESCO

RESULTS OF A UNESCO-UNICEF TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF EFA ASSESSMENT (1997)

In October 1997, at a technical workshop on effective monitoring of Education For All, a set of indicators to be used when monitoring the early childhood education component of EFA was put forward. The six ECCD dimensions and the indicators proposed at the UNICEF-UNESCO meeting are:

Demography	*Children under 6 as % of total population.*
Participation	*Percentage enroled in structured programmes.*
Policy	*Presence of an early childhood national policy and/or curriculum.*
Training	*Percentage of teachers (including Grade 1 teachers), caregivers, and parents/families trained in early childhood matters.*
Funding	*Percentage of (national) budget devoted to early childhood care and education.*

School readiness *Health/nutritional status (height/age) and percentage of first graders who have had some form of an early childhood programme.*

A brief look at each of these helps to illustrate how difficult it is to come up with adequate indicators, while providing a base for considering alternatives.

- Children under six as a percentage of total population (demography)

This proposed population context indicator takes "under six" as a starting point, as contrasted with the "under five" indicator used in the previous example, and is expressed in terms of a percentage of total population rather than as an absolute figure. Presumably, the interpretation that converts this population statistic into an indicator is that a country will be better able to attend to its children under six if it has relatively less of them to attend to. The absolute number of children under six from which the indicator is created helps to define the potential demand for early childhood programmes and sets a base for calculating another indicator-the enrolment (participation) ratio. Although the general conception may make sense that relatively fewer children under six is better than more children under six, it is difficult to imagine the particular goal against which this indicator should be interpreted. Clearly the goal is not to eliminate all children under age six. Is there an "optimum" percentage of under-six children that we seek? Is there some point at which having fewer children under six becomes a disadvantage instead of an advantage?

- n Percentage of enrolment in structured programmes (participation)

This is the most common indicator used for monitoring ECCD. The recommendation from the UNICEF-UNESCO technical committee is that this indicator includes enrolment in both formal and non-formal early childhood programmes.

This indicator may be interpreted in at least two ways. One is against a goal of a certain percentage (usually 100 percent) enrolment that is taken as the measure of successfully satisfying all demand (or providing access to all children). The second way of interpreting this indicator is by comparing the level of enrolment for different countries, sometimes using a set of Minority World countries as the standard, and sometimes looking at the enrolment ratio in relation to the relative economic wealth of the country. Pitfalls of this indicator will be discussed below.

- Presence of an early childhood national policy and/or curriculum

This indicator is an indicator of political will. The assumption behind this indicator is that creating a national policy and/or curriculum is good. However, it is not clear that the presence of a national policy is necessarily a meaningful indicator, and linking this to a national curriculum is questionable. In fact, the presence of a national policy and a national curriculum may be a handicap because instead of promoting ECCD in a holistic, culturally-sensitive way, the existence of nation-wide policy and methodology often promote conformity to a single mould. They may not allow for recognised, validated, and successful variants. For instance, Montessori and other respected curricula are not officially recognised in Mexico as valid because the Ministry of Education has developed its own curriculum that is supposed to be applied nationally.

How would one define the presence of an early childhood national policy? In Latin America, plans that are directed toward the fulfilment of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28, Nov. 20, 1989) exist in almost all countries. These plans are usually taken as an indication that a country has a national childhood policy. Such plans usually concentrate on health and nutrition in the early years because at the Summit on Children in September 1990 the decade goals were set out almost exclusively in terms of health and nutrition indicators. While the plans always include attention to education, it is usually at the level of primary school and above, with perhaps a nod to formal preschool education. This is not surprising in light of the fact that the section of the Convention that deals with education posits that education and learning begin with entrance into primary school (United Nations General Assembly 1989). Early childhood care and development is dispersed among other sections of the Convention and is often linked more to welfare and working parents than to education. Should we consider a national plan that is keyed to the Convention, as interpreted through the Summit on Children, as indicative of an early childhood national policy? The answer is not clear. In brief, if this indictor is used it needs to be carefully defined, and it should probably not be linked to national plans based on "decade" indicators set out by the Summit in 1990.

■ The percentage of teachers (including grade one teachers), caregivers, and parents/families trained in early childhood matters

With the inclusion of this indicator in the set, a useful attempt is being made by the UNICEF-UNESCO group to add a qualitative dimension to the indicators of effort. This indicator has been applied usefully in the 1995 review of European programmes, showing that caregivers (in programmes of structured caregiving) who care for children birth-three (often in daycare home arrangements) are the least trained (European Commission 1996). So this indicator my indeed have value, however, we need to look a bit further before we can agree to any steadfast determinations.

First, it seems logical to separate out teachers and caregivers from parents and families when creating an indicator. Programmes aimed at parental or family education are simply not the same as those that are provided for teachers and caregivers working in settings outside the home (or caring for children in groups in a home). Often, parental education programmes are provided through the mass media. Should we count these? Or the programmes are formally organised, but limited in scope. China, for example, used to give a "diploma" to parents for attending eight lectures during a period of one year. Mexico has a forty-week, one-year programme of initial education that involves parents or others responsible for children at home. But the programme is not anywhere near what is required for preschool teachers or caregivers in formal centres. Are these systems of training equivalent?

When establishing this indicator, how should training be measured? Should it be on a year-by-year basis or is it cumulative? Should it be linked to participation in some kind of formal course?[8] For example, how does one treat the training of teachers that occurs outside the system? In Mexico, we find a large number of informal courses being offered for early childhood teachers and caregivers that are not sanctioned by the system. These range from courses offered by large book companies using their own materials, to courses offered by non-governmental and social organisations, which are often higher quality courses than some of the official courses offered in standard schools.

- The percentage of (national) budget devoted to early childhood care and education (funding)

This indicator suggests both national capacity or will to support ECCD and is an expression of the effort being made to do so. The goal against which this statistic should be judged is not clear, however. Is there a specific percentage figure toward which all countries should work? Is a higher percentage always better?

Before such an indicator can be used, it will need to be defined much more specifically. For instance, are we talking about funding for nutrition and child health programmes as well as funding for childcare programmes and for early childhood programmes within the education system? Or just education and child care? If the latter, would the relevant comparison be to the combined budgets of education and social security (or welfare), or rather than to the national budget? What if the bulk of early childhood programmes are within a women's programme (as in China, or as was true at one time in Indonesia, or is the case for the under-three programmes of Peru)? How does one define this indicator so that it will be comparable across nations?

Should the comparison be with the "national budget"? If so, how does one take into account the differences in debt commitments among countries that reduce the amount available for current programmes?

It may be useful to focus on the percent of the education budget devoted to early childhood programmes, and to relate this percentage to the percentage of children enroled in an early education programme taken as a percentage of all children (or people) enroled in all programmes funded through the education sector. It is common to find that the percentage of early education students to total students is much higher than the percentage of budget allotted to preprimary education. Of course this depends on whether there are other kinds of budgetary allotments covering this group. Supporting this indicator is the notion that early childhood education programmes should receive a proportion of the education budget that is at least up to the level of the percentage of early education children in the system, however this indicator has the disadvantage of being limited to education and departs from an integrated view of ECCD, leaving out health and welfare programmes.

- Health/nutritional status (height/age) and percentage of first graders who have had some form of early childhood programme ("school readiness")

Labeling this indicator set as "school readiness" suggests that this is an attempt to create an indicator measuring the effects of ECCD programmes. But the specific indicators proposed do not move us beyond the assumption that if a child has participated in some kind of early childhood programme, he/she will exhibit improved development (and readiness for school); they also do not give us an indicator of early childhood development.

The two indicators combined here are quite different from one another. The health and nutritional indictor says something about the actual status of children. But the percentage of children with some form of an early childhood programme does not tell us anything about the status of children or their "readiness" for school; it simply tells us that they participated in a programme. For that reason, this indicator might be grouped with the coverage/enrolment/ participation indicator and would not be included it here as a measure or indicator of school

readiness. Again, it is patently clear that we lack an agreed-upon measure for the developmental status of young children.

OECD

- Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators

In this periodic publication, OECD presents information concerning participation in pre-primary education in OECD countries. In addition to presenting a gross enrolment ratio, with subdivisions into public and private and full-time vs. part-time, the publication indicates starting and ending ages for the figures given. The indicator can produce such strange results as a gross enrolment ratio of 208.5% for Norway (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 1992, 71).

- The ECEC Project

This project is designed to open up systems of data collection and monitoring. Based on twelve country case studies, the OECD will recommend new indicators and forms of data collection and reporting.

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD): THEMATIC REVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE POLICY

Rationale

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is receiving increased policy attention in OECD countries. Not only is the provision of care and education for young children a necessary condition for ensuring the equal access of women to the labour market but increasingly, early development is seen as the foundation of lifelong learning. In addition, when sustained by effective fiscal, social, and employment measures in support of parents and communities, early childhood programming can help to provide a fair start in life for all children and contribute to social integration.

Developments to Date

In spring 1998, a new Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy was launched under the auspices of the Education Committee of the OECD. Twelve countries volunteered to participate in the review between autumn 1998 and summer 2000: Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. These countries have reached agreement concerning the framework, scope and process of the review and have identified the major policy issues for investigation. In addition, a schedule of country visits by OECD review teams has been planned. Information about these visits can be viewed on the OECD/ECEC website: www.oecd.org/els/ecec.

Review Objectives

The goal of the review is to provide cross-national information to improve policy-making and planning in early childhood education and care in all OECD countries. With the aid of ministries and the major actors in ECEC in each country, the review seeks to:

- Distinguish and investigate the ECEC contexts, major policy concerns, and policy responses to address these concerns in participating countries;
- Explore the roles of national government, decentralised authorities, NGOs and other social partners, and the institutional resources devoted to planning and implementation at each level;
- Identify feasible policy options suited to different contexts;
- Evaluate the impact, coherence and effectiveness of different approaches;
- Highlight particularly innovative policies and practices; and
- Contribute to the INES (Indicators of Education Systems) project by identifying the types of data and instruments to be developed in support of ECEC information collection, policy-making, research, monitoring and evaluation.

Scope of the Review and Major Issues for Investigation

In order to examine thoroughly what children experience in the first years of life, the review adopts a broad, holistic approach. It studies policy, programmes and provision for children from birth to compulsory school age, including the transition period from ECEC to primary schooling. Consideration is given to the roles of families, communities and other environmental influences on children's early learning and development. In particular, the review investigates concerns about quality, access and equity with an emphasis on policy development in the following areas: regulations, staffing, programme content and implementation, family engagement and support, funding and financing.

Organisation of the Review Process

The review process has four main elements:

- Guided by a common framework, each participating country drafts a Background Report that provides a concise overview of the country context, major issues and concerns, distinctive ECEC policies and provision, innovative approaches, and available evaluation data.
- A multinational team of reviewers with diverse policy and analytical backgrounds then studies the Background Report and other relevant materials, prior to conducting an intensive case study visit of the country in question.
- Following the Review Visit, a short Country Note is prepared by the OECD Secretariat, which draws upon information provided in the Background Report, the Review Team assessment and other relevant sources. The Note provides insights into current ECEC policy, the major challenges encountered, the means adopted to meet national goals, and it explores feasible policy options to ensure quality, access, and equity.

- The review will be completed by a Comparative Report drafted by the OECD Secretariat. The report will provide a comparative review and analysis of ECEC policy in all twelve participating countries. Focusing on key policy issues and responses in the ECEC field, its interim drafts will benefit from the contributions of national representatives and experts at future meetings.

The OECD Secretariat held a meeting of national representatives and invited experts in Paris on 28-29 September 2000 to discuss a draft Comparative Report which will be published in Spring 2001.

With approval from country authorities, Background Reports, Country Notes, and other review findings will be shared with all interested policymakers, researchers, programme developers, and practitioners.

The following OECD Secretariat staff working on the Thematic Review of ECEC Policy Education and Training Division can be reached at this address or via e-mail or phone: 2 rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, FRANCE, www.oecd.org/els/ecec. Fax: (33-1) 45-24-90-98

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WORLD FORUM

EFA Mid-decade review: Working Document and Statistical Document (1996)

In 1996, in the mid-decade review of EFA prepared for the EFA Forum meeting in Jordan, a working document was prepared which included a section on early childhood development. The indicators used at that time to show progress in expansion were the changes in developing countries since 1990 in: 1) the number of children in the three-six age group enroled in pre-primary institutions (both the total and the percentage of girls), 2) the number of pre-primary institutions, and 3) the number of caregivers employed in the field. These indicators are presented in the text of the working document in general terms, but they are not included in the accompanying statistical document that presented information at the country level. The mid-term EFA review also suggested several general qualitative trends in ECD but made no reference to specific indicators.

The source which is used to draw the conclusions about ECD enrolments and trends is not mentioned, but it is most likely the result of the periodic surveys of education carried out by UNESCO, from which data are taken for the World Survey of Education and for the World Education Report.

As indicated earlier, one motivation for addressing this topic comes from the treatment of ECCD indicators in the EFA Year 2000 Evaluation. In the technical guidelines provided by the EFA Forum, two ECCD indicators are presented for which information should be collected and presented in country reports. These are:

1. A Gross Enrolment Ratio in early childhood development programmes, and

2. The percentage of new entrants to Grade One who have attended some form of organised early childhood development programme during at least one year (or for one enrolment period).

The two indicators selected are both enrolment indicators, one of current enrolment and one of past enrolment. They do not allow for assessment of the quality of the inputs to early childhood programmes, the efficiency of the programmes, the programme effects on children, nor the financial contributions made by nations to this part of the educational system. When the number and breadth of indicators of ECCD progress included in the EFA technical guidelines is compared with the thirteen indicators provided in the same document to assess primary schooling, it is even more evident that the treatment of ECCD is very limited and given a low priority.

- Gross Enrolment

The definition of this indicator, as set out in the EFA Technical Guidelines, is as follows:

> *"Total number of children enrolled in early childhood development programmes, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the relevant official age-group, otherwise the age-group 3 to 5. This indicator measures the general level of participation of young children in early childhood development programmes. It also indicates a country's capacity to prepare young children for primary education." (EFA Forum, Technical Guidelines 2000, 8)*

A number of cautions are in order when trying to interpret what this indicator tells us about ECCD based on the information actually collected as part of the EFA evaluation.

First, direct comparisons of enrolment levels and percentages among countries should not be made because there are significant differences from country to country in:

- The definition of the age group that is considered as part of ECCD and for whom data is presented.[9]
- The baseline year and the year for which the latest enrolment data are presented.[10]
- The definition of what constitutes an early childhood programme.[11]
- The days and hours that programmes are in session differ widely from country to country.[12]

- The degree to which centres providing early childhood attention are allowed to operate outside the official system in an irregular manner, and therefore outside the official statistics, creating an underestimate of enrolment.
- The reliability of the figures.

Second, when looking at increases in enrolment it is important to take into account the baseline from which the increases are being made.[13]

Third, and often overlooked: enrolment data tend to be collected at the outset of each year and are based on registrations rather than actual participation in a programme. Such information does not take into account cases of children who never arrive at school even though they are registered nor changes in enrolment that occur during the year, including cases of children who decide not to continue after a few days or weeks. The stability of the enrolment of children in programmes varies from country to country. Moreover, some children are on the attendance rolls all year long but rarely attend school. An alternative sometimes proposed is to collect statistics on "actively enroled" students.

Fourth, some children attend more than one programme, leading to double counting and over-estimation.

Fifth, gross enrolment ratios (GER) are used. This does not make much of a difference for most countries because the incidence of children who are over or under the age range for which percentages are calculated is minimal. However, in other cases ECCD programmes include a significant proportion of children outside the age range chosen (e.g., Brazil, where more than ninety percent of the more than one million children enroled in a pre-school literacy programme were six years of age or older and about forty percent were seven or older).

Sixth, in some reports, the age range was not made clear. In others, there were inconsistencies in the data presented at different points of the report (usually minor, but nevertheless inconsistent).

Seventh, in a significant number of country reports, the requested data were not presented, sometimes because the enrolment statistics were lacking or because census or other population data for the relevant age group was lacking.

Eighth, there is a questionable assumption behind this indicator; it is tacitly assumed that gross enrolment should be 100% and that this is good. As one moves down the age spectrum toward birth, this assumption becomes less and less viable. It is not clear that having forty percent of all children aged two in some kind of organised childcare programme is necessarily better than having five percent in such programmes. The judgement attached to the indicator will depend on how highly a society values caring for children at home and on whether alternative programmes are providing support to parents in the lower percentage country that are not available to parents in the higher percentage country.

In brief, even such a seemingly simple indicator as enrolment must be treated sceptically when used at an international level to make comparisons.

- New Entrants with Early Childhood Programme Experience

The definition of this indicator as set out in the EFA Technical Guidelines is as follows:

> *"Number of new entrants to primary grade 1 who have attended some form of organised early childhood development programme equivalent to at least 200 hours, expressed as a percentage of total number of new entrants to primary grade 1. This indicator helps to assess the proportion of new entrants to grade 1 who presumably have received some preparation for primary schooling through ECD programmes." (International Consultative Forum)*

In application, the number of new entrants was not presented for many countries because this information is not normally collected. This led to some innovative ways of estimating the percentage. The indicator did not, however, add significantly to the current enrolment information gathered.

Some General Conclusions

Although the above listing by no means exhausts the activities and publications dealing with ECCD measures and indicators, an examination of these various activities does allow several general conclusions:

1. At an international level, there is a lack of agreement about satisfactory indicators to monitor progress with respect to early childhood care and development (ECCD).

2. Monitoring of ECCD programmes tends to be very limited, mainly focused on "effort" defined by coverage (enrolment or enrolment ratios). Occasionally, attention is given to quality, usually by assessing inputs (e.g., expenditures or the formal qualifications of personnel). Indicators of "effects", including the actual developmental status of children, are virtually absent from national and international monitoring and assessment of ECCD.

3. Indicators are seldom disaggregated so they can be related to poverty, disadvantage, or disability (as specified in the EFA framework).

4. There are several new initiatives that offer promise for improving the creation and use of ECCD indicators.

A Process for Arriving at a Set of Indicators

- Establish an inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary ECCD group to discuss and determine what indicators can/should be utilised to monitor the status of young children, the environments affecting their development, and the programmes intended to improve their development.

Ideally such a group should include people who have responsibilities for planning and monitoring programmes in the areas of health, nutrition, education, welfare, and other areas within which early childhood may be situated conceptually and bureaucratically within a country. It would include the potential users of information as well as the information gatherers and the people technically competent in measurement within the converging fields. If the group could function within the framework of a national commission on ECCD or a national committee

to monitor children's rights, or an equivalent framework that makes sense locally, this would help give legitimacy and visibility to its recommendations. It may be advisable to locate the responsibility for coordinating efforts outside a particular sector, perhaps in a national planning office, or perhaps even with a prominent NGO working on ECCD matters.

A first meeting of such a group may require a general discussion of early childhood care and development, seen from the different perspectives present, and of ECCD in the larger national social and economic development picture. Any discussion of indicators will need to depart from mutual understandings of what ECCD is and why it is important.

- Review existing systems of monitoring and data collection that contain information relevant to ECCD.

This review might be commissioned prior to the first meeting of the ECCD reference group, as input into its initial discussions, or it might be an outcome of a first meeting in which all present contribute to identifying and suggesting where to look for such information.

As part of the review it would be useful, for each source of information, to be able to answer such questions as:

- What dimensions of child welfare and development are covered by the particular information being collected? What are the specific indicators created from the information?
- Does the information say something about the status of children, about the circumstances affecting their development, the reach, quality, efficiency, and financing of various services?
- Why is the information collected? What is its purpose? Can the information be appropriated for other purposes as well?
- What instruments are used to collect the information? Are they reliable, valid, appropriate?
- Who is responsible for collecting the information, both administratively and at the point of collection? Are those who actually provide/collect the information adequately trained?
- At what point (age or stage of development) in the life of a young child, or in the life of a programme, is the information collected?
- From whom, or about whom, is the information collected? Is it based on a sample or collected for all children and programmes? Are both informal and formal modalities of care and education included?
- How often is the information collected?
- How is the information processed, analysed and disseminated? To whom?
- What is the cost of collecting and making available the information?

SOURCES The review should include sources of information that are sometimes not considered when thinking about children and programmes for children. For instance, household surveys of employment or family welfare, often produce information from which ECCD indicators can be

created. For instance, in some household studies, a question has been included about whether a child is being cared for during the day in a centre outside the home. This information may provide a more accurate tally of the use of childcare services because it may pick up unofficial and unregistered services. This source has potential for going beyond simple indicators to explore reasons why particular families do or do not use services as related to family characteristics. The surveys may also provide information about "risk factors" affecting early childhood care and development.

Other possible sources for creating indicators might be census data; national or sectoral budgets; national plans; educational or welfare enrolment statistics; records of health check-ups or use of services at various points from pregnancy through a child's entrance into school; health and nutrition monitoring cards; programme or project monitoring systems; evaluations carried out at the point of entrance into primary school; project evaluations; special surveys; and research projects. Readers will undoubtedly think of other possible sources.

Such a review may produce a wealth of data or very little, depending on the particular setting. However, even in settings with little tradition of monitoring programmes and with undeveloped or informal systems of collecting information, it may be possible to identify existing sources that have not been well used and which, with relatively little effort, might be improved and upgraded. For instance, many programmes collect information for internal bureaucratic purposes (for instance, about the number of children and staff) that is sent to headquarters, but, after an internal look, gets filed away or stored in a back room, without considering how it might be used for other broader purposes.

- Choose indicators: with information in hand and with clarity of purpose, the ECCD group needs to decide what ECCD indicators are desired.

Achieving clarity of purpose while working with many different interests is likely to be a difficult process requiring compromises. It can lead easily to recommending a broad set of indicators intended to serve many purposes and/or conciliate diverse interests, but every attempt should be made to limit the indicators, both because the cost of collecting information may make the proposed monitoring scheme impossible to implement and because a limited number of well-chosen indicators is more likely to be recognised and acted upon than a vast array of indicators.

In choosing indicators, a number of questions should be considered:

  - Do the indicators allow monitoring of specific ECCD goals and programmes?
  - Are they clear and comprehensible?
  - Can they be disaggregated along such dimensions as gender, urban-rural, public-private, economic or social strata, administrative divisions?
  - Can they be applied over time?
  - Do they cover different ECCD dimensions and different ages?
  - Can the indicators be operationalised?

- Determine what needs to be done to operationalise the proposed set of indicators.

This step involves comparing what already exists with what is desired. It involves revisiting several of the questions set out for the review of existing sources, with an eye to how existing systems can be improved in terms of their instrumentation and their systems of collecting, processing, and presenting information (including the training of information providers), and at what cost.

Decisions will need to be made about the age(s) of children on whom information will be collected. At birth? At age three? At the point of entry into school? Decisions about the age for which indicators are created will be affected by the identified purposes and by the way in which services and programmes for young children are organised. For example, an argument has been made for collecting information at the point of entrance into primary school. At this important moment of transition for many children, an indicator can reflect all that has occurred to affect development prior to that point in time and can serve as a baseline for assessing how children do subsequently in primary school.

With respect to programmes, decisions may need to be taken concerning what constitutes an ECCD programme. A brief discussion of this issue can be found in the appendix to this article.

For some indicators, it may be advisable to consider working with a sample of children rather than with the entire population. A well-chosen sample allows conclusions for the population as a whole while reducing costs of collection. Sampling may be made relatively easy by the presence of sampling frames created for other purposes such as employment or income surveys (see the case of Jamaica on page 54). Or, a sample might be taken of children at the point of entrance into primary school, taking advantage of the data collected for the entire population at that time, while at the same time collecting additional information for a smaller group of randomly chosen children.

Working with a sample may allow assessments of children to be conducted by more highly trained people so that the results will be rigorous and reliable, something that would not be as easy to do if information is gathered from all children. In addition, collecting information from a sample of children helps to avoid the "labeling" issue, i.e., characterising specific children as delayed. Indeed, with this issue in mind, the National Educational Goals Panel in the United States suggests that it may even be possible to utilise a technique called matrix sampling whereby individual children provide responses to only one part of a test or protocol, but then all the collected information is then pooled for analysis.

For some ECCD dimensions, instrumentation may not be a problem. For instance, in most settings, there is not only agreement about what health and nutrition indicators should used to monitor the status of young children but also about the particular instruments to be used to do achieve that end. However, the psychosocial dimensions of early development are not so easily agreed upon or operationalised. Indeed, a great deal of effort may need to be made to arrive at agreement on how to collect information that will yield indicators of a child's developmental progress with respect to, for example, cognitive development, language development, and social development as seen in relation to a broad view of human development or more narrowly in relation to readiness for primary school. In other parts of this *Notebook* we review sources that may be helpful in trying to arrive at agreement about what instruments and measures to use to

monitor psychosocial development (see reviews of Grigorenko and Sternberg and Shepard, Kagan, and Wurtz).

If the above appears somewhat daunting, it may be useful to keep in mind the conclusions of a study conducted by Childwatch, which looked at the possibility of creating indicators for use in monitoring the Convention on the Rights of the Child and which concluded that, in most settings, the following hold true:

- It will be possible to modify collection of data at modest costs.
- A great deal of information exists and the basic problem is one of assembling and reconciling.
- It will be possible to utilise existing data collection points such as schools, clinics, and sentinel sites.

For more information, see the project website
www.childwatch.uio.no/cwi/projects/indicators/index.html

In addition, we can take heart from the example of Nepal (see p.66) where an ECCD group found little information available but decided to create its own instruments and test them out for later use at a national level.

An additional step in this process may be to write up a proposal that can be presented to the pertinent participating groups and/or to national and international sources of funds so that the process of establishing the desired system of indicators can be put in place. Some piloting of instruments and measures may be needed as well.

A Set of Possible Indicators

With some reservations, a set of sixteen indicators is presented below that might be considered when discussing indicators to be used for monitoring ECCD at a national level and with advocacy and planning purposes in mind. These are not intended as recommended indicators to be put into immediate use, but rather are intended to stimulate discussion that could lead to the identification of an appropriate set of indicators for each individual setting. Reservations stem from past experience in using this set as a starting point for discussion when working on the indicators project of The Consultative Group. (See A Note on the Work of The Consultative Group, p.32) where the presentation of indicators seemed to introduce a bias into the conversation and limited the search for alternatives

The sixteen possible indicators are organised in the following categories:

- Coverage, access, use
- Programme quality
- Political will: policy and financing
- Costs and expenditures
- Status of or effects on children and parents

Coverage, Access, and Use

1. Gross Enrolment: Gross enrolment in early childhood programmes, expressed as a percentage of the relevant age group in a given year.

Why create this indicator?

In earlier parts of this article, we have criticised the way in which this indicator is presently being used internationally. Nevertheless, the indicator has value because it shows the degree to which a society is providing ECCD services of some sort for its young children. The assumption is that involvement in ECCD programmes will provide children with an enjoyable experience that will also help to prepare them better for school and life. In theory, then, the closer coverage is to 100%, the better. This interpretation must be qualified because not all children at all ages will necessarily need or profit from an ECCD programme. Also, some ECCD programmes will be of such poor quality that they may even be harmful to the children in them. It is imperative, therefore, that this quantitative indicator be supplemented by indicators of quality.

It is likely that the distribution of ECCD services will be uneven in a society, typically favouring urban areas, dominant social groups, and richer families. Use of services may also be gender biased. By disaggregating data and looking at indicators for sub-populations it should be possible to uncover these biases, thereby supporting advocacy efforts as well as generating a search for proposed actions to help to balance the distribution.

If the coverage indicator is followed over time (particularly for sub-populations disaggregated by age and perhaps by other characteristics), it is possible to determine where society is putting its greatest effort, into what kinds of ECCD programmes, and directed to whom.

If data can be disaggregated by age, indicators can be compared across countries. When such enrolment indicators are related to contextual indicators such as GDP/capita, it is possible to see if a particular country is making an effort to provide services at the level that might be expected of it given its resource base.

What information is needed to calculate this indicator?

1. A count of the total number of children of different ages (up to the age of primary school entrance) who are in ECCD programmes that meet the age and organisational criteria which define a programme.

2. An updated population count that shows how many children there are in each of the relevant age categories-0, 1, 2, 3, etc.

SOURCES Enrolment figures may be provided by various government ministries responsible for ECCD programmes. Population figures will come from census data or recent national surveys. It may also be possible to obtain the enrolment data from household surveys, in which case a household survey would have to ask questions such as, "Is your child being cared for or educated by someone outside the home (on a regular basis? Or, for a period of three hours or more per day?)," and, "If so, by whom (with a list of the most logical alternatives to choose from). With these two questions one could include childcare arrangements outside the formal system, as well

as enrolment in the formal system in different kinds of options. It would be possible also to calculate a usage indicator for each age period and to disaggregate by economic and social characteristics of families as well.

This indicator has been dealt with in some detail because it is the indicator most often used for ECCD. At the same time, it is seldom calculated accurately and is usually not disaggregated by age. It is hoped that we can improve upon the calculation.

2. PARENTAL EDUCATION. THE NUMBER OF YOUNG CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN ECCD EDUCATION PROGRAMMES, EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE RELEVANT POPULATION GROUP.

Why create this indicator?

Parental education programmes complement services that attend directly to children and can be very effective in improving child development and learning. For policy, planning, and advocacy, it is instructive to see how a society prioritises in terms of parental education or service delivery, and how these different strategies evolve over time. There is currently a tendency in some countries to expand parental education rapidly, allowing government to take credit for ECCD actions over a broad front while at the same time neglecting service delivery. For instance, in Mexico, coverage for parental education programmes, directed to children under four years of age, has expanded ninety-five percent during the last five years vs. an expansion of twelve percent for centre-based programmes.

What information is needed to calculate this indicator?

1. The number of children (from birth to entrance into primary school) whose parents or caregivers are enroled in parental education programmes.

In each country, a decision will need to be made about what parameters to apply when defining which parental education programmes should be included in this count (for example, the number of hours or frequency of meetings or certification according to some predetermined system). Within the category of parental education programmes it may make sense to include programmes that allow the educator and the caregiver(s) to meet frequently (every week or every two weeks), and that extend over a period of, let us say, at least twenty sessions of at least an hour each. Twenty hours of parental education is clearly not much and perhaps the limit should be set higher. It is not clear that the following kind of programmes, sometimes labeled "parental education," should be included; our inclination would be to leave them aside.

- *The audience of parents that views TV spots about ECCD*

- *The audience that views TV series about ECCD (unless that is linked to some sort of discussion process bringing people together periodically to discuss the content of the programmes and unless the series extends over at least 20 sessions)*

- *Pre-marriage parental counselling*

- *Informal counselling by health personnel*

- Organised talks at health centres that focus only on immunisation, diarrhoea, and other matters related to disease. However, if these are part of a systematic and integrated set of periodic talks or discussions that span at least twenty hours then they would be included.

The reader should note that the indicator is expressed in terms of the number of children whose parents or caregivers are enroled in a programme rather than in terms of the number of parents or caregivers enroled in a programme. This takes the indicator out of the realm of adult education and puts it in the early childhood area.

In order to arrive at the number of young children potentially affected by parental education, it will probably be necessary to estimate (or to determine from census data) the number of children who are indirectly covered by taking the number of adults enroled in the programme and multiplying by the average number of children under age six in a family. A typical family with young children, for instance, might have one or two young children. Example: If a programme has 400,000 parents and caregivers enroled and the average number of young children in a family is 1.3, the total number of children would be 520,000.

2. The population of children in the relevant age group.

Another reason for emphasising children rather than adults in this indicator is that deciding how to define the "relevant population group" for adults is not straightforward. For instance, parental education may be directed to teenagers who do not yet have children (but may have childcare responsibilities or who will have such responsibilities in the future). Programmes may also include grandparents or other family members who do not now have young children but who are responsible for the care and education of young children in the extended family.

If we focus on children and assume that each person in a parental education programme has a childcare responsibility, then we can take the total number of young children in the population as our base, just as was done for the first indicator.

However, parental education programmes are often "targeted" and the expectation is not that all children in society would be affected by such programmes; rather, the expectation is that children and families in a certain category (rural or poor or other) are the target. In this case, for policy relevance, the relevant population would seem to be the particular set of children in families with those characteristics.

SOURCES The main source of information for this indicator will come from periodic surveys of parental programmes carried out by the responsible administrative entities.

ELEMENTS OF QUALITY IN EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Elements that define quality and have been associated with effectiveness in early education programmes include the following:

Aims and objectives Clear aims and objectives set and shared by teachers and parents, understood by children, and subject to modification through a process involving all interested

parties. The process for agreeing on the aims and objectives may be more important than the outcomes.

Education agents The continuous presence of sensitive, healthy, committed, loving, and responsible adults who, as a result of experience and training, are knowledgeable about how children develop and who interact with children in a consistent, respectful, supportive, and unthreatening way.

Curriculum A proven curriculum that takes a holistic view of a child's development; provides a variety of relevant, stimulating, and enjoyable learning experiences for both setting roots and learning to fly; encourages children to play, explore, and initiate their own learning activities; and that respects and attends to individual differences. A quality curriculum integrates education and care, attending to children's physical, social, and emotional needs, as well as to their cognitive and intellectual needs. And it fosters sound relationships of the child with self, with others, and with the environment.

Physical environment A clean, ventilated, stimulating, secure, and healthy environment providing enough space for children to play.

Evaluation Use of systematic and validated evaluation methods by education agents and parents to adjust teaching to children's needs.

Ratio of children to adults A ratio low enough to permit frequent interaction and personal attention when needed.

Training and supervision Meaningful training on the job and supervisory support fostering continued professional and personal growth.

Programme leadership Strong leadership that devotes much time to coordinating and managing, yet stays close to the daily process of educating and socialising children.

Parental and community participation Real involvement and participation of families and communities as partners in the programme, helping the programme to set appropriate standards, to function well, and to adjust to local conditions and needs at the same time that they learn to improve their attention to young children.

Resources A consistent and permanent financial and material resource base sufficient to support working in an appropriate way with children and to sustain educational activities so that education agents need not be distracted from their immediate task of educating children.

Source: Ball 1994; Moss and Pence 1995; Schweinhart 1995; NAEYC 1986; Basili 1994.

Quality

"Quality" is an elusive concept. In the box below, several elements that have been identified as defining quality in effective early education programmes are presented. Each of these could be developed into an indicator.

Participants in any process to create ECCD indicators are strongly encouraged to consider other indicators that might be fashioned with existing data and/or that they feel are more appropriate to their particular context than those set out below. For instance, a UNESCO publication recently suggested the following possible dimensions of a quality process in education:

- *Regular, punctual teacher attendance*
- *High levels of children's attendance*
- *Teacher maintains good records about all children*
- *Teacher knows each child's name and background*
- *Time spent engaged in high academic activities*
- *Relevant/interesting activities/materials*
- *Participatory learning strategies*
- *Matching instruction to child's readiness and interest abilities*
- *Structured and planned use of time*
- *Comfortable working environment (temperature, lighting)*
- *Attractive learning environment*
- *Access to mass media (radio)*
- *Regular marking and feedback of pupil's work*
- *Thorough preparation for all class sessions*
- *Effective school leadership*
- *Regular professional support/supervision*
- *Mutual respect (teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil, pupil-teacher)*
- *Enrichment/remedial activities/materials*
- *Regular monitoring of essential learning competencies*
- *Coherent theory of how children learn*

These dimensions were set forth more with the primary school period rather than the preschool period in mind, and they imply application of an observation instrument, but they may serve to key people to the kinds of indicators they would like to have in order to make policy and programming decisions.

It is common to hear that the people who participate in giving care and education constitute the most important component of the quality of a programme. The ability of the teacher or caregiver is however conditioned to some extent by the number of children for whom she must be responsible. This leads to a first possible indicator of quality that is frequently calculated.

3. Number of children per teacher/caregiver

Why create this indicator?

Most countries establish norms for the number of children it is thought can be reasonably attended to by teachers and caregivers. Usually these norms differ according to age group. It is assumed that fewer children per teacher/caregiver is usually preferred because it allows the adult to pay more individual attention to the child, which, in turn, is assumed to promote better learning and development. A very large number of children per teacher tends to restrict one-on-one activities by requiring much more attention to group control and management instead of promoting learning through exploration and attention to individual needs.

Warning: This indicator may work well for evaluating specific programmes, but in order for it to be meaningful at a system level there is a need to be able to disaggregate by the age of children being attended to and/or by the type of programme because norms vary by age, ranging from one adult for every four or five one-year-olds, to one adult for every twenty-five five-year-olds. If all ages are lumped together and are then related to the number of adults, the resulting average figure is difficult to interpret. This will less often be the case if the number of students can be classified according to type of programme, while distinguishing preschool programmes that are directed to children ages four to five, from programmes directed primarily to children who are under four.

What information is needed to create the indicator?

1. The number of children being attended to in ECCD programmes.

Ideally, the number of children should be classified by age. This will probably be difficult to do in a way that the resulting number can be related directly and in a meaningful way to the number of adults with responsibility for those particular children. However, in some locations where periodic surveys of individual centres are carried out, it may be possible to generate this information by going to original data. An alternative may be to classify children by type of programme, attempting to distinguish preschool programmes catering to children in the immediate pre-school years (usually ages four and five) from children in programmes which emphasise attention to younger children.

2. The number of teachers/caregivers attending children within each age group.

Taking from the EFA Technical Guidelines: "Teachers are persons who, in their professional capacity, guide and direct pupils' learning experiences in gaining the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are stipulated in a defined curriculum programme." If this definition is applied, all teachers who do not have professional qualifications would be excluded and all centres that do not follow a defined curriculum programme would be excluded. It is not clear whether teacher's aides would be included. These decisions need to be made in order to arrive at the total number

of teachers/caregivers. Presumably, custodial and administrative personnel would not be included (unless they also serve a dual role as teacher).

Our position is that all adults who attend directly to children should be counted when calculating this indicator because many systems rely heavily on uncertified adults who are nevertheless capable of providing a great deal of loving attention and fostering of learning that helps children to develop. Certification will be covered by another indicator.

SOURCES The main source of information for this indicator will come from periodic surveys of ECCD centres carried out by the responsible administrative entities.

4. Teacher qualification. The percentage of teachers/caregivers who are "qualified".

Why create this indicator?

It is commonly assumed that more highly qualified teachers or caregivers will provide better attention to young children. Systems typically pride themselves on having a high percentage of qualified teachers. This indicator is suggested as one way of taking a reading on how qualified the staff of programmes is, with implications for what sort of additional preparation may be needed.

WARNING Often "better qualified" is defined in terms of a paper qualification, usually referring to a degree that indicates the completion of a particular set of early education courses or the achievement of a certificate indicating that a set of criteria have been met. Although this may be true at a very general level, we know that formal qualifications do not necessarily make a good teacher; lack of experience, poor motivation, discontent related to low remuneration, and lack of self confidence, among others, can prevent paper qualifications from being converted into sound practice. In addition, we know that many uncertified teachers and caregivers throughout the world bring basic knowledge, experience, and motivation to ECCD, having a greater impact on the lives of children than many certified or titled teachers. Finally, it is possible to provide quality care by combining highly qualified and experienced personnel with aides or assistants who are competent but who are not formally qualified and are learning on the job.

For these reasons, using teacher qualification is at best a very rough indicator of quality and, in some settings may not be particularly valid or useful unless the definition of qualification goes well beyond formal paper qualifications to include experience and training courses that are outside the standard certification process.

What information is needed to create the indicator?

1. The number of qualified staff.

First, a definition must be arrived at of what it means to be qualified. Then information must be collected to determine how many active staff meet that qualification.

2. The total number of teachers/caregivers.

When discussing indicator three, it was suggested that a broad definition of teacher/caregiver might be applied which would include all adults that are responsible for direct attention to children in the programme.

SOURCES The main source of information for this indicator will come from surveys of ECCD centres carried out by the responsible administrative entities.

5. Physical environment

A specific indicator will not be suggested here, but those who would like to create such an indicator may want to try and reach agreement about an indicator of the quality of the physical environment that seems appropriate to the context. A wide variety of instruments exist for rating physical environments, based on such factors as the amount of space available per child, safety

precautions taken, the presence of functional and clean sanitary facilities, availability of potable water, etc.

The main source of information for this indicator will probably come from periodic surveys of ECCD centres carried out by the responsible administrative entities. However, a special survey may need to be created (as has been done in Namibia, for example, see p.60).

6. Curriculum or Interaction

Probably the best indicator of the quality of ECCD programmes would be an indicator which captures the quality of interaction between adults and children in childcare and early education settings. To do this, systematic observations would be required in a sample of different programme settings. One example of a study that is providing such data is the IEA pre-primary study which has applied an observation schedule within childcare and early education settings in 15 countries (see p.24). In addition to measuring the percentage of time children are interacting with adults or with other children, the study generates information about such curricular dimensions as: 1) the variety of types of activities in which children participate and the group structure proposed by the teacher; 2) who proposes the activity in which a child is engaged (child or teacher); and 3) the percentage of observations in which teachers are listening to children's responses or comments.[16] Although such observations are somewhat costly and time consuming, they may be judged to be worth the effort.

Obviously, the above do not exhaust the possibilities for creating indicators of quality. For instance, the quality of programmes can also be judged by the effects those programmes have on children. Effects will be treated in a separate category later on.

THE IEA PREPRIMARY PROJECT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMES IN 15 COUNTRIES

The IEA Preprimary Project14 is a groundbreaking, three-phase comparative study of early childhood services in nations on four continents. The purpose of the study is to identify the settings in which young children of various nations spend their time, to assess the "quality of life" for children in these settings, and to determine how these settings affect children's intellectual, social, and academic development at age seven. The impetus for the study comes from the social, economic, and demographic changes occurring during the past three decades that have produced an accelerating demand for services for young children, and from the resulting need by countries for more comprehensive information to meet these emerging needs of families. Specifically, nations need information about the quality of children's experiences in currently existing early childhood settings and about the effects of those experiences on children's later development. Such information can help policymakers develop programmes to meet the fast-growing demand for early childhood services. It also can assist government agencies in their attempts to integrate early childhood programme planning with other long-term social and economic planning.

Project Strengths

A particular strength of the IEA Preprimary Project is that its participating countries15 provide information on a number of dimensions, including form of government, population, and stage of development. In general, the participating countries are ones that do not have extremely high infant mortality rates and thus have been able to move from concerns about child survival to concerns about providing adequate education and care services for their young children.

Another strength of the study is that it is conducted with the significant cooperation and contributions of early childhood researchers in the participating countries, including a coordinating centre usually within a university or government agency. In addition, the project is directed by a person familiar with the local provision of early childhood services, with the organisational aspects of local early childhood agencies, and with the country's major cultural/ethnicity features. A critical related strength is the involvement of the National Research Coordinators (NRC) in all stages of the development and implementation of the cross-national project, most importantly, the development of all instruments-interviews, questionnaires, observation systems and the child development status measures

Phase 1 (1986-1994) produced profiles of national policies on the care and education of young children (Olmsted and Weikart 1989), and used a household survey to identify and characterise the major early childhood care and education settings used by families with four-year-old children in each nation (Olmsted and Weikart 1994). Status: Completed.

Phase 2 (1989-2000) uses extensive observational (see below for more information) and interview data to examine the time-use, interactive, and structural characteristics of each nation's major types of early childhood settings and to explore the effects of programme and family factors on children's developmental status at age four. Four research monographs will report the Phase 2 findings:

- Teacher and parent beliefs about important areas of development for young children (Weikart 1999)
- Structural characteristics of early childhood settings (In press 2000)
- Observation findings from early childhood settings
- Children's developmental status at age four and the relationship between developmental status and home settings characteristics

Status: The first research monograph has been published and the second one will be released in 2000. Work continues on the final two research monographs.

Phase 3 (1993-2002) completes the project by documenting how these early experiences affect children's development at age seven, an age when all children in the participating countries will have had at least one year of formal schooling. The purpose of this final phase is to examine the relationship between early childhood experiences at age four and children's cognitive, language, social, and academic development at age seven, all of which are relevant to primary school performance and success.

Status: At present, the Phase 3 data collection has been completed.

Development of Phase 2 Instruments

For the development of the observation systems, the NRC groups worked to ensure that the observation systems would not be primarily related to the developmental stage of a country or the socioeconomic level of children attending the setting. The group also agreed that in order to make descriptive comparisons across various types of settings, the final observation systems would be designed to be equally appropriate for all types of ECCD settings (i.e., a preschool programme in urban Belgium or an informal group of children with a caregiver in rural Thailand). Consequently, the NRCs focused on the processes that occur in an ECCD setting rather than on the physical characteristics of the setting. Three areas were chosen for observation: 1) adult's management of children's time 2) children's activities and interactions with other children and adults, and 3) adult's behaviours and interactions with children. In developing the observation systems, the NRC group had two major goals: to describe what was actually happening in an ECCD setting and to assess the quality of the setting based on the processes occurring within the setting. To date, quality in ECCD settings has most often been assessed on the basis of input (static) indicators (i.e., teacher's years of experience, group size) and although these were considered important to describe a good quality programme, the group wanted to assess quality based on the actual activities and interactions occurring within the setting.

For more information, contact the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation at: 600 North River Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898. Tel: (734) 485-2000; Fax: (734) 485-0704; E-mail: info@highscope.org.

Political Will: Policy and Financing

7. Policy. Presence of a national ECCD policy and/or plan

Why create this indicator?

In the monitoring related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it has become standard practice to ask if countries have an explicit policy pertaining to Child Rights and if the country has established a National Plan of Action based on that policy, with goals, activities, and expected outcomes. The assumption is that making child rights policy explicit and establishing a plan will not only provide a basis for action but also for the monitoring of those actions. The mere presence or absence of a policy and a plan becomes a basis for judging political will.

WARNING Whereas this indicator might be useful for making a crude comparison across countries, it is probably not as useful as it would be at a national level. Within national settings, it might be more useful to look within policies and plans to see whether, in some sense, such plans are integrated and whether they are intended to reach the poorest members of society as well as the middle class or the rich. Moreover, all countries follow some sort of ECCD policy, but that policy may not be explicit and may actually be one of inaction. In others, an explicit policy may exist but may be ignored. All countries have an education policy. Some countries have policies

that relate childcare to women's work (or to work by family members). Some countries incorporate parental education into education and/or health plans of action. Some countries have a policy and plan related to nutrition and feeding. Rarely do these elements come together in one policy and plan applied specifically to young children. Accordingly, it may be difficult to develop a meaningful indicator that captures political will in a general way with respect to ECCD policy and plans.

Participants may want to look within existing policies to see whether or not the policy meets a number of criteria thought to be essential for a good policy, using that as an ECCD indicator of how far the country is along the road to reaching the goal of a good policy.

8. Budget allocation. The percentage of the educational budget allocated, to or spent on, ECCD programmes

Why create this indicator?

When the major part of ECCD programming is provided under the auspices of the educational sector, this indicator may be very useful; if attention is spread out over many agencies it may not be as relevant. As an example, in Jamaica (p.54), it was possible to show that only two percent of the education budget was destined for pre-primary programmes whereas the number of children enroled in pre-primary programmes accounted for almost twenty percent of the overall educational enrolment.

If this indicator is deemed appropriate and useful, it would be preferable to work with information about expenditures rather than budgets. Budgets sometimes represent more a political statement than a reality, with significant shifting occurring among budget categories during the course of a year. However, if expenditures are used, the disadvantage is that figures will probably not be as up-to-date.

Cost/Expenditure

9. Costs (or average expenditure) by government per child on ECCD

Why create this indicator?

Presumably, the higher the level of per student expenditure (taking inflation and/or purchasing power into account), the greater the government commitment to ECCD. Also, it is sometimes suggested that higher expenditures will indicate that a system is of higher quality. It is possible, however, to imagine that higher expenditures will simply reflect increased inefficiency and will not really result in improvements in quality. For that reason, it is important also to have data on the effects of spending as well as on actual expenditures.

10. Costs (or average expenditure) by government per child on ECCD programmes as a percentage of Gross National Product per inhabitant

Why create this indicator?

If the purpose is to see how well a country is doing relative to other countries, expenditures will need to be put into context before comparisons can have meaning. One way of doing that is to

relate expenditures per child to GNP per inhabitant. In this way it is possible to see whether a country is putting the same relative effort into its ECCD programmes.

11. Average expenditure per child by family on ECCD for children under six as a percentage of minimum salary (or of family income)

Why create this indicator?

It is one thing to judge government financial commitment to ECCD programmes and another to determine at what level families are committing their resources to ECCD. If the philosophy of a government is to provide universal services to families at little or no cost, this indicator will have less meaning than if the philosophy of a government is to provide incentives for families to invest in their children. This indicator, if related to (disaggregated by) level of family income will also tell a great deal about inequalities with respect to ECCD.

In order to create this indicator, it will be necessary to have access to household surveys that collect information about expenditures for education and childcare.

Effects (the status of child and parent knowledge)

This dimension of indicator is extremely important and has not been properly incorporated into assessments of early childhood programming. Some idea of programme effects is needed to complement measures of coverage and of quality as measured by programme inputs or processes. More is not always better. A curriculum change may or may not bring about a change in the status of participating children.

12. Child Development

Why create this indicator?

A major purpose of ECCD programmes is or should be to have positive effects on children's development, so it is logical to turn to a measure of the developmental status of children. Optimal child development refers to the child's ability to acquire culturally relevant skills and behaviours, which allow the child to function effectively in his/her current context as well as to adapt successfully when the context changes, and/or to bring about change.

The fact that the use of an indicator of the level of a child's development is rising in a country may or may not be related to an increase in the extension or quality of ECCD programmes. Improvements may be related to changes in economic conditions or to improved levels of parental education, for instance. If the purpose is to see whether programmes have had an impact, this indicator might be created for regions in which a programme is functioning and for regions in which it is not, so a comparison can be made.

What information is needed to create the indicator and how might it be collected?

A variety of possible tests, scales, and observational information might be used to establish an indicator of child development. Each country will have to determine what it thinks is the most appropriate indicator for child development, and it must determine at what ages that information

should be collected. There are literally hundreds of tests and scales that purport to measure child development. The problem in any particular national setting may be to obtain agreement on what specific measures and instruments should be used to measure development, both generally and with respect to various dimensions at different ages. The problem may be more political than technical. Among the reasons that agreement is difficult to obtain are due to the following:

- different theoretical and ideological postures are reflected in instruments;

- questions about the degree to which instruments have been adjusted to the culture (for both imported instruments that have been adjusted in some way and for instruments that have been created locally);

- questions about the reliability and validity of the instruments;

- disagreement about the basic purpose that the measure and instrument should serve (for instance, some feel that it is much more beneficial to use instruments for developmental screening than to measure the general developmental status of children or to demonstrate a child's "readiness" for school); and

- personal squabbling among those who create different scales which are culturally appropriate, reliable, and valid.

This is not the place to enter into a discussion about what constitutes a good measure or instrument or to try and detail the different dimensions of development that might be included. This is something that has to be agreed upon locally. On the other hand, it is clear that measures and instruments should be reliable, valid, culture and language sensitive, and they should cover several dimensions of development. They should try also to be easy to apply and as inexpensive as possible.

In some countries, a degree of consensus has been reached on selecting an instrument, and although there may still be some residual disagreement on which tool is selected, that instrument is being used to measure how children are progressing in their development. From that instrument, an indicator can be fashioned. Examples follow:

- In Chile, two tests have been developed locally that measure several dimensions of development, one focusing on ages birth-two and another for ages two-six. These tests have been incorporated into the regular monitoring process of the health system, which in Chile, as contrasted with many other countries in the Majority World, is accessible to and used by a very high percentage of the population. From the Chilean test comes, for instance, an indicator of the percentage of children who are delayed in their language development at age five.

- In Jamaica, a system has been established that will allow a profile of children to be described at the point of entry into school. The system combines information obtained from a national household survey with information collected by the national system of health and by the Ministry of Education which administers tests to children at the point of entry into primary school (during the first several weeks of the school year). The system

allows indicators to be provided for nutrition as well as for several dimensions of psychosocial development.

- In Bolivia, a test is being administered to a sample of all children in urban areas through the existing sample survey system. An indicator has been created of the percentage of children judged to be in an "alert" status.
- In Lebanon, a test has been created for administration in all preschool centres.

The challenge for countries where some level of agreement has not been reached about instruments and measures and where none is in common use will be to see whether such agreement can be reached and/or to select a measure that might be applied through an existing organisation that can reach a random sample of children on a national basis.

13: School readiness

Why create this indicator?

One of the rationales for establishing ECCD programmes is that children who participate in them will be better prepared for school. This will subsequently result in better progress and performance of children in school, thereby lowering repetition and desertion rates to the benefit of both children and school systems (these might be taken as longer-term indicators of the outcomes of ECCD programmes, but the more immediate effect or outcome is a change in the status of children that prepares them to move into a primary school educational setting).

There is a tendency to define school readiness in narrow terms of cognitive developmental status, language, and sometimes in terms of the ability of children to know their alphabet and even to read before entering primary school. Accordingly, many child development experts object to the idea of measuring "school readiness". We would argue that a measure of the cognitive status of children-at the point of entry into school and perhaps at earlier ages as well-can be an extremely useful indicator for countries. However, we would also argue that a better assessment of school readiness would include indicators of the emotional and physical development of children. If this is the case, it is possible to think that a measure of school readiness would be very similar to a measure of child development. It also leads one to think in terms of a set of indicators that describe different aspects of child development or of school readiness, keeping in mind that development is holistic and integral. In that vein, the following nutritional and health indicators should be considered also as possible indicators of the effects of ECCD programmes.

14: Nutritional status

A range of indicators of nutritional status of children are being used internationally that include: weight for age, height for age, height for weight, arm circumference, and levels of various micro-nutrients. The task here is to discover what indicators are deemed useful in a particular setting and to see how these indicators move over time, if possible in relation to particular groups and areas and programmes.

15: Health status

Health indicators are usually well-established as well, and, as with nutrition, the challenge will not be to create new indicators, but rather to incorporate existing indicators into a broader system that looks at the broad developmental status (including physical development) of children.

16. Parental knowledge and expectations

Why create this indicator?

Parents are and will continue to be the people primarily responsible for the care and education of children. If parents are better informed about child development and about possible actions they can take to improve development, then the status of children should improve.

In order to establish this indicator it is necessary to define what parents "should" know. This can be a tricky business when childrearing practices of a particular culture do not correspond with the practices that "science" or another dominant culture suggests should be the norm. Nevertheless, it may be possible to agree upon some basic knowledge that all parents should have that may improve their capacity to assist their developing child.

A Concluding Note

Perhaps the greatest challenge for those who would monitor the state of children, their environments, and programmes intended to improve ECCD is to create indicators that show, with sensitivity to differences, what is happening with respect to the psychosocial development of children. It is our position that this cannot be done in a way that is comparable across countries but our hope is that this limitation will not prove to be a barrier to the search for reliable, and valid indicators of psychosocial development that are deemed appropriate to the particular settings in which they are to be used and which can help to guide policy and programming.

Appendix 1: What Constitutes an ECCD Programme?

One of the first questions that will arise when trying to establish ECCD indicators to inform and monitor policy and programming is, "What constitutes an ECCD programme?" The answer is not straightforward. For the purposes of this exercise, we suggest that two criteria be applied in order to identify an ECCD programme.

- Age: The programme should serve children who are below the age of entry into formal primary school.
- Organised system of attention that includes "education": The programme should follow some organised system of attention to young children that includes an educational component (which could be stimulation that facilitates learning rather than direct attention to learning specific facts or concepts or skills).

Each of these will be discussed in turn.

AGE. Applying the criterion stated, the upper age limit depends on the age of entry into primary education which can range from age five to age seven. In some countries, kindergarten, which

serves children age five, is considered part of the formal education system (e.g., Trinidad) and so is not counted in pre-school statistics which include, then, only children age four or below. In other countries, children do not enter primary school until age seven so the statistics include children age six.

In the EFA Year 2000 Assessment, the potential upper age limit is set at eight years of age. This is consistent with many definitions used for "early childhood," and, although such overlap is useful when considering the educational content and the transition between preschool programmes of various types and primary school programmes, it can easily lead to overlap, and confusion with indicators applied to assessing primary schools and schooling.

The lower age limit in this exercise is theoretically the time of birth or age zero. This follows the EFA posture that "learning begins at birth." It is not expected that newborns will be found in centre-based programmes that follow an organised system of attention including an educational component. However, parental education programmes may be directed toward parents during the pre-natal period or immediately following birth. Moreover, it is a common practice in some countries for children to enter centre-based programmes at different intervals between birth and the first year-programmes that do indeed pay systematic attention to the mental as well as physical development of the young children. In Mexico, for instance, The Integrated Child Development Centres run by Social Security begin accepting children at forty-three days.

Extending the lower limit downward in this way runs counter to the practice followed by UNESCO when preparing its "pre-primary education" statistics. In the UNESCO case, the lower age limit is placed at three years because "...programmes destined for younger children do not normally satisfy the educational criteria in ISCED" (International Standard Classification of Education). Indeed, it means that programmes that are called "childcare" programmes may be included as ECCD programmes for the purposes of creating indicators.

The EFA Year 2000 Assessment handles age limits by making reference to "the official age-group concerned, if any, otherwise the age-group three-five." This leaves open the possibility of including children over the complete age spectrum from birth to primary school entrance and beyond but tries to focus on the three-five age-group.[17]

The above discussion should make clear that:

- it will be difficult to make direct comparisons across countries with respect to indicators of early childhood programmes because there is no standard age grouping which these programmes serve, UNLESS
- information is disaggregated by age on a year-by-year basis. Accordingly, a goal should be to obtain information classified by age for the range of ECCD programmes being offered. This opens up the option of creating a set of indicators organised by age. Indicators of coverage would, for example, compare the enrolments at each age level with the number of children of that age in the relevant population. This would make possible international comparisons, age by age, or for grouped categories of age such as the three-five category suggested in the Year 2000 Assessment.

ORGANISED SYSTEM OF ATTENTION THAT INCLUDES "EDUCATION". To be considered an ECCD programme for which data would be collected, the offerings of the programme operators should include, at least in theory, conscious attention to enhancing a child's learning through early stimulation, instruction, or other developmental activities that go beyond simple provision of health, food, and security. In placing this restriction, we are attempting to make a distinction between organised custodial child care and organised early childhood care and development, a distinction that is often difficult to make.

According to this definition, integrated childcare programmes can and should be included in a count or an analysis if they provide a developmental component in their programmes, even if they are formally labeled "childcare centres" or "guarderias" or some similar denotation.

Moreover, programmes that advertise themselves as including attention to early stimulation, instruction, pre-school activities, etc. would be included even though they might not, in practice, follow the advertised path and even though the staff of the centre is not duly certified with the pedagogical qualifications deemed appropriate. This dimension of ECCD would be handled with specific indicators of quality rather than by attempting to incorporate quality directly into the definition of what constitutes an ECCD programme. It then becomes important to complement indicators of coverage with indicators of quality.

The reader will note that the definition of an ECCD programme is not linked to several other criteria that are often consciously or unconsciously applied:

LOCATION. In this exercise, we do *not* limit the definition of an ECCD programme to one that is school- or centre-based. This puts us at odds with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) definition which does take as a main criteria for pre-primary education that a programme be "school or centre based."

For example, we would argue that organised programmes of home daycare, such as that offered by women in their homes in Colombian neighbourhoods, should be included in the process of creating indicators if they meet the above two criteria. They probably would not be included in a UNESCO statistical count or analysis because they are not in a school or centre (even though by taking in various children a home is in a sense converted into a centre). Moreover, such home-based programmes would be included even if the quality of the attention to enhancing learning in these homes is relatively poor because they are part of an organised programme that includes a stimulation and education component in its design.

Not included would be cases of childminding carried out in private homes (either the home of the child or in another home) where an informal agreement is made between a mother and a childminder who is not part of any organised programme.[18]

The question of location becomes even more difficult if programmes directed to the education of parents are included as early childhood programmes.

AUSPICE. Both public and private programmes should be included.

Programmes should be included if they meet the basic criteria whether or not they are under the administration of the health sector or a social security or a welfare agency or the education sector. Both public and private programmes should be included.

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Footnotes

1 The article draws on work that being carried on in many parts, but it particularly focuses on several projects that have been carried out by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development. These projects have been financed by UNICEF, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and the International Development Research Centre.

2 Social indicators have been with us for a long time. During approximately the last two decades, however, the creation and use of social indicators have become much more widespread.

3 See also Appendix 1: What Constitutes an ECCD Programme

4 This set of categories is adapted from Windham, 1992, p.30.

5 Even in this case, some caution needs to be exercised because the degree of under-reporting of births varies markedly from country to country. But this is a matter of the accuracy of the data, not a problem inherent in the definition of the indicator.

6 These refer to the programmes that are excluded from the current definition of ISCED-0, and they are mostly non-formal programmes. But as the current definition of ISCED-0 does not explicitly exclude non-formal programmes, the excluded components are not referred to as non-formal early childhood programmes. Instead, as ISCED-0 is defined as pre-primary education, the rest are referred to as non-pre-primary programmes until a more exhaustively defined terminology is found.

7 When finalised, the document can be obtained from UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section (b.combes@unesco.org).

8 Suppose that 5 percent of all parents of young children are offered some kind of formal parental education course during year 1. The next year, another 5 percent are offered training. But some of these parents are the same ones that participated the year before, let us say 1 percent. Is our indicator for year two based on enrolment in year 2 (5 percent) or enrolment of new parents in year 2 (4 percent, or the sum of the enrolment in courses during years 1 and 2 (10 percent) or the total number of parents who have participated during the 2 years (9 percent)? Normally, systems of statistics for parental education report the parents educated in a specific year. They do not report the accumulation of parental education in the population. Although we have statistics for the number or percentage of teachers in a system who are "certified" or qualified by some standard, we do not have an equivalent for "certification" of parents that would be a cumulative figure.

9 The age group taken as the reference point varied widely, some using the period from birth to age five, others focusing only on ages five-six, and still others using the suggested age range from three-five.

10 Many countries did not have data for 1990, so they used an alternative baseline, in some cases as recently as 1996. In some cases, countries presented data for 1999, but others used information from 1998 or 1997.

11 In some countries, statistics pertain only to formal programmes or to those in the education sector (leaving out, for instance, those run by a family welfare or social security organisation). Very few countries include parental education in their total statistics. An exception is Cuba, which includes such figures and where parental education accounts for 70% of the total enrolment.

12 In most countries, programmes are based on half-day sessions running throughout the school year, but in some countries early education includes cram sessions of two months just before entrance into primary school, and in others the standard is a day-long programme. Or, a particular country may have various programmes that differ widely in terms of times of operation; however all will be included on an equal basis in their totals.

13 It is possible to have increased enrolment by, for instance, 500% over ten years, but still cover less than 5% of the age group. And, as full enrolment is approached, it is more difficult, statistically and in terms of involving more students, to show an increase.

14 The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is the designated international coordinating centre and the U.S. national research centre for the IEA Preprimary Project.

15 The 15 participating nations in Phases 2 and 3 of the IEA Preprimary Project include: Belgium, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Spain in Western Europe; Poland, Romania, and Slovenia in eastern Europe; China (People's Republic), Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Thailand in Asia, Nigeria in Africa, and the United States in North America.

16 The IEA Pre-primary study is being carried out by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

17 In the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) developed and followed by UNESCO, the minimum age must be at least three years of age. "This age has been chosen since programmes destined for younger children do not normally satisfy the educational criteria in ISCED (p.10).

18 Some such arrangements may in fact be more conducive to healthy child development than more formal programmes.

INDICATORS, A NOTE ON WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP

This note summarises three different activities bearing on the theme of ECCD indicators that the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (CG) has carried out over the last twelve years, including a review of child development instruments and measures, constructing a child profile, and searching for ECCD indicators.

A Review of Instruments and Measures

The CG began its work in this area in 1987 by commissioning reviews of the measures and instruments being used in various countries to evaluate the development of young children. Our interest was sparked by the observation that most countries of the world cannot describe the psychosocial developmental status of their young children whereas they can describe the health and nutritional status of those children. We thought the process of looking at existing measures would be a contribution to helping countries move toward agreeing upon such measures for broader use. From this early exercise came a number of papers including:[1]

Analysis of Instruments Used in Latin America to Measure Psychosocial Development and Environmental Risk in Children from 0 to 6 Years of Age.

LUCILLE ATKINS, 1989.

Summary: In many Latin American countries creative efforts are being made to develop and/or adapt instruments designed to measure the psychosocial development of children from birth to six years of age. This review is an effort on the part of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development to contribute to the more optimal functioning of such instruments within the context of early intervention programmes. The purpose of the review is to focus attention on the importance of adequately developing and validating these instruments, to suggest specific criteria on which instruments could be selected, to examine existing instruments in the light of these criteria, and to make recommendations concerning future needs in regards to the development and implementation of such instruments.

Measuring the Psychosocial Development of Young Children. Summary Report of a Technical Workshop, 7-10 May, 1990.

CASSIE LANDERS AND CIGDEM KASBITCIBASI, OCTOBER 1990.

Summary: In May 1990 a workshop was held in Florence to discuss technical issues and practical implications of instruments designed to measure the psychosocial development of infants and young children. The workshop was jointly sponsored by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, New York, USA, and the UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, Italy. This event brought together twenty-four international child development specialists from fourteen countries with expertise in psychology, pediatrics, and programme development. The workshop evolved from the shared recognition of the unmet need for reliable, valid, culturally-relevant measures and instruments designed to describe the early development of children. Relatively high agreement has been achieved regarding indicators and

instruments that can be used to measure the physical dimension of development. On the other hand, there is little consensus regarding measures of cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions or ways to measure the impact of the childrearing environment on development. The goals of the workshop were to identify critical issues and establish an analytical framework to guide the review of existing child development measures; to coordinate and monitor the preparation of country reviews; and to organise a concluding workshop to present country reviews regarding the use of instruments in early childhood development programmes. This report summarises the results of the workshop.

Measuring the Development of Young Children: A Comparative Review of Screening and Assessment Techniques.

CASSIE LANDERS, ED., APRIL 1992.

Summary: This report reviews and critiques a range of existing instruments (in Latin America, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey and Sri Lanka.)

As evident from the country reviews, the persistent interest in and need for measures to guide, support and monitor the development of the child prior to school continues. In spite of this enthusiastic response, the reviews also underscored the considerable confusion surrounding the design, use, and interpretation of standardised testing procedures. Data regarding the standardisation, reliability and validity of measures currently in use is sorely lacking. Instruments are often used for a range of purposes for which they are not intended, and unfortunately bear little responsibility to enhancing the provision of services. When the specific purposes, components, selection criteria, and limitations of each screening and assessment technique are directly confronted, the picture is far less cloudy. Recognising the constraints inherent in the use of standardised tests combined with the limited attention to the actual or potential use of such instruments in the development of programmes, the report highlights the role of nonstandardised testing in the form of systematic observations, anecdotal records, or locally or nationally developed checklists, in enhancing the design and implementation of services to children and families.

Comment

Although the documents produced for this project contain valuable information, are available and are potentially useful, they have not, to our knowledge, led to any major change in the way countries collect and use information about ECCD. One important reason for this may be that the work was carried out by "experts" working at an international level and was not integrated into a process of review and re-examination at national levels involving key people in the ECCD field and others who are responsible for monitoring and planning programmes.

Constructing a Child Development Profile

A second approach to measures and instruments and indicators taken by the Consultative Group was to work on establishing what were called Child Status Profiles in four countries (Jamaica, Colombia, Jordan, and Kenya). The project focused on describing children at the age of entry into primary school. This point in time was chosen because it is an important moment of transition in the life of many children; a description at this point would reflect the result of all

that influenced development before entering school and could also serve as a baseline for monitoring progress and performance in primary school.

A profiling approach was taken in order to reflect the position that child development is multi-faceted and integral, involving physical, intellectual, social and emotional development and that there is synergistic relationships among health, nutrition, and psychosocial states affecting these various dimensions of development. The profiles, therefore, were to include measures of heath status, nutritional status, and intellectual and social status. Although not an attribute of the child, it was suggested that a measure of parental knowledge, expectation, and support might also serve as an indicator of the environment in which young children are developing, and as such might be included in the profile.

The project also considered indicators of the status of the primary school institutions receiving the children, reasoning that schools should be prepared for children and not just the reverse. Included in the school profile were indicators of the availability of and/or access to primary schooling, of the quality of that schooling, and of teacher expectations.

In each of the four countries in the project, a process was developed to review existing information and instruments being used to measure and monitor the status of children in their early years. An important part of this process involved bringing together experts in the fields of education, psychology, health, nutrition, and other fields with government officials from pertinent departments in order to seek consensus on a set of measures describing a profile of children at the point of entry into primary school.

From the Profiles project came documents from the four countries setting out the variables agreed upon to form a profile and suggesting next steps for trying to go about collecting the information to create profiles. In the cases of Jordan and Kenya, despite important advances in defining indicators, the proposals for next steps were not funded and the project came to a halt. Reports are available setting out the measures and instruments favoured as are proposals that would help move the agreements to action on a pilot basis.

In the Colombian case, the organisation responsible for the study, the International Centre for Human Development and Education (CINDE), used its own funds to carry out the field work that resulted in the creation of profiles for individual children, schools, and for one region of Colombia (the Choco). This work continues as part of a monitoring process taken on by CINDE. However, the profile measures and process have not been adopted nationally.

In Jamaica, The Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC), working with a multi-sectoral group, arrived at a set of indicators and a process for obtaining information that began by identifying a national sample of five-year-olds through a periodic household survey. Follow-up funding was obtained from the Interamerican Development Bank to move ahead with a pilot of the profile. Work continues toward putting an apparatus in place in Jamaica that would provide, in an integrated way, information allowing policymakers and programmers to follow over time the progress made in improving the status of young children along several dimensions. This has been a long and torturous process affected by a need to validate measures as well as by governmental changes. This process and some lessons learned along the way can be found in the article on p.54 of the *Notebook*.

In Search of Early Childhood Care and Development Indicators

A third approach to the topic by the Consultative Group was sparked by the EFA Year 2000 Evaluation. Recognising the weaknesses of the approach taken to ECCD in the EFA Evaluation, the Consultative Group decided to mount a "Search for ECCD Indicators" in five countries.

Against this background, funding was made available to carry out a set of case studies that would do a more thorough job of describing the state of early childhood education, care, and development in those countries. The project aspired also to develop a process in each country that would lead to defining and operationalising a set of agreed-upon indicators for each country. The countries involved are: Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, Colombia and Jamaica. In the latter two cases we hoped to give additional stimulus to the profile work done earlier and/or to draw upon the results of those earlier efforts. In each country in which the project is being carried out, we asked the person or group responsible to:

- propose a set of possible indicators for assessing different dimensions of ECCD, beginning with the set of indicators suggested in the technical guidelines;
- review existing systems of data collection and available measurement instruments that are being, or might be, used to provide the information needed to create the proposed indicators;
- organise a meeting within the country to discuss, critique, and identify the proposed set of indicators and the sources of data identified;
- collect the data required to produce, in so far as possible, the agreed upon ECCD indicators;
- collect additional information that sheds light on the status of young children and of ECCD programmes; and,
- prepare a country report presenting results from the above activities.

To guide the country case studies, both general and technical guidelines were prepared. *As a starting point for discussion*, the technical guidelines set out some thoughts on the use of indicators, on what constitutes an ECCD programme, and on specific indicators to be considered, critiqued and discarded, adjusted or adopted along the way. The sixteen indicators suggested (see pages 20-29) were intended to provide information about coverage, quality, political will, costs and expenditures, and effects on children.

Some Early Results from the Project

This project is still in process, with different participants at different stages. However, as will be evident from the summary reports from each project provided in the *Notebook* following this article, interesting results have already emerged from the project.

One of the most fascinating part of the results to date is to see how each country exercise has taken on its own form.

In the Philippines, for instance, an effort was made to use the sixteen suggested indicators to arrive at as complete a description as possible of the actual state of ECCD in that country. The Philippine document presents a much more complete picture of ECCD in the Philippines than

that reported in the EFA evaluation. An effort was made also to critique, adjust, substitute, and prioritise among the sixteen indicators. A report reflecting that effort is forthcoming.

In Nepal, the existing data were found to be so scarce or unreliable that it was not deemed possible to use the suggested indicators as a basis for describing ECCD in the country. The topic served to mobilise a group that was called together to discuss indicators; the group decided to work out a conceptual scheme, placing indicators within a child rights framework. That conceptual framework, presented on p.66, helps to locate and differentiate various indicators at national, district, community, and family levels, as well as at the level of the individual child. In Nepal, a review was also carried out of the existing system of data collection and monitoring. Out of that process they began to operationalise a set of tools for collecting data at the village/community level. This led to the creation of new tools and to a preliminary survey testing the instruments, and to providing some basic data on several dimensions of development.

In Colombia, considerable energy has been devoted to defining the information presently collected by a wide range of organisations and to a critique of the sixteen proposed indicators. A report of this joint activity has been presented. In addition, a beginning has been made with respect to defining, for the Colombian setting, indicators which seemed not only relevant but viable and most important. Possible ways of collecting the data have been discussed. A proposal is being formulated for presentation to the Presidency to fund experimental collection and analysis of information through the household survey mechanism already in place by adding a module on ECCD.

The Namibian country case provides a critique of the suggested indicators, using the indicators deemed appropriate for which data were available to describe the situation of children and of ECCD programmes in Namibia. The report goes well beyond that which was presented to EFA. Results are reported of an interesting survey of ECCD services carried out in one part of the country. Follow-up actions are suggested and the report, now finalised, has been published.

Jamaica reached apparent agreement on a set of indicators and a process for obtaining the information. A pilot was carried out and various adjustments were made, both in the indicators and in the process. The Jamaican report, presented on p.54, notes several lessons learned along the way as a process to monitor ECCD nationally has been set in motion.

Despite these differences and the preliminary nature of the reports (except for Namibia which has submitted a final report) several conclusions are emerging:

- The process of arriving at the indicators to be used, of discussing how they might be operationalised, and of trying out what has been agreed upon is as important as the particular indicators that are created. Moreover, the process of discussing indicators can be used to bring together groups involved in ECCD who do not normally talk to each other or coordinate activities. It can be a basis for setting up a kind of national lobby or for reinforcing such a lobby.

- It is sometimes difficult to get people to think outside a set of specific indicators if these are provided beforehand, no matter how much emphasis is placed on the suggested indicators as "starting points for discussion." In this sense, the provision of sixteen indicators biased the search.

- It is more obvious than ever that countries are at very different points in a process of mounting information systems so that any programme to work at the country level will have to be tailored to the particular circumstances of that country. In those cases where information systems are not well developed, the process will be prolonged, will involve a great deal of trial and error, and will require additional financing at the outset.

- The suggested indicators were not always deemed to be the best, generating some good criticism. Some useful and creative alternatives have been proposed; however, constructing alternatives seems to be harder than criticizing. Examples of alternatives that arose included indicators of parental participation and HIV/AIDS.

- Arriving at agreement about instruments that purport to measure "child development" continues to be a contentious and difficult process.

- There is agreement about the value of defining indicators locally, trying to respect cultural differences, differences in conditions, and differences in histories.

- There is agreement about such issues as the need to disaggregate enrolment data by age.

- Problems noted:

  - *Enrolment data are not always collected by age.*

  - *Some countries have a problem of unregistered centres.*

  - *Data are not collected for parents or caregivers.*

  - *There is lack of agreement about the type of curriculum.*

  - *There are practical and cost difficulties in observing interactions between children and their caregivers/teachers.*

- The process of moving from describing what information is available, and from agreement to bringing about changes that are needed in the collection and use of information, is a long one and requires a more sustained effort than can be generated through the process set in motion by the project.

- If the process is to work in the field, the measurement instruments must be validated, and mechanisms need to be in place to assure reliable application of instruments. (See the Jamaican summary.)

- Any system of indicators should be "user-friendly" so that those involved in monitoring will be motivated and able to incorporate results into their thinking and planning.

A Concluding Note

In all of the above, several themes seem to repeat themselves related to the instruments and measures required to generate the information needed to operationalise indicators. Among them are:

- We need multiple instruments and measures to meet different purposes and settings and to reflect multiple dimensions of development.
- The instruments and measures should be valid, reliable, age-appropriate, and culturally appropriate. At the same time, the results should be easy to interpret (user-friendly).
- It is important to develop and apply instruments and measures that assess environments and risks as well as those that attempt to directly assess various aspects of a child's developmental status.
- Extreme caution should be exercised in labeling children based on the outcome of a test for a variety of reasons.
- Repeated measures are to be preferred over snapshots where individual children are concerned.

Despite these cautions, or perhaps because of them, a concerted effort is needed in each national setting to put together the battery of instruments that will allow monitoring of the developmental status of children and of the environments affecting development. Without such an effort, we will remain without good indicators of children's developmental status. As should be evident from this edition of the *Notebook*, important strides have been made toward the goal of being able to monitor psychosocial development in a wide range of settings; we need now to appropriate and extend these efforts.

Related Resources

Print Materials

ASSESSING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD. *Elena L. Grigorenko and Robert J. Sternberg. December 1999. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, Human Development Network.*

Elena Grigorenko and Robert Sternberg, from Moscow University and Yale University respectively, present a review of the assessment of cognitive development in three parts. The first section deals with general principles of early childhood assessment. The second describes major domains in which the various assessment tools can be compared, evaluated, and selected. And the third presents brief descriptions and evaluations of selected instruments. Thirty pages of text are accompanied by another thirty pages of references and bibliography.

The authors posit that early childhood assessment is guided by the five following major principles:

- No single test can address all questions or solve all problems.

- There is a greater likelihood of substantial levels of measurement error in early childhood assessment than in assessment at any other period of a child's life.

- Young children usually perform better in the company of adults.

- Young children's performance is profoundly influenced by the setting in which the assessment takes place.

- Assessment should extend over a period of time.

Quoting Knoff, the authors indicate that assessment should be multi-method, multi-source, and multi-setting. They then discuss the three most prevalent forms of assessment: testing, interviewing, and behavioural observation. The major domains of behaviour are included (general cognitive abilities, language, nonverbal processing, motor, executive functions, memory, social/emotional adjustment and pre-academic skills), and various tests that might be used for assessment are associated with each of these areas.

The authors argue that five distinct issues should be considered when evaluating a developmental test:

- The extent to which the purpose of the test fits the purpose of the assessment.

- The source of the test data.

- The quality of the test standardisation and the relevance of the population on which it was standardised to the population being tested.

- The psychometric properties of the test.

- The qualitative characteristics of the test.

Each of these issues is discussed briefly and criteria for evaluating tests in relation to each are presented. Specific tests are then reviewed and classified into the following categories: multi-domain assessment (including standardised tests and behaviour rating scales), "theories-of-cognition-based" tests, and criterion/norm-referenced assessment.

The tests considered have been developed in the Minority World and no attention is given to adaptations of these tests to various locations in the Majority World.

PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENTS. *Lorrie Shepard, Sharon Lynn Kagan, and Emily Wurtz, eds. February 1998. Washington, D.C.: National Education Goals Panel.*

This booklet was prepared as a submission to the National Education Goals Panel in relation to the following goal: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." It is a response to the charge to, "create clear guidelines regarding the nature, functions, and uses of early childhood assessments, including assessment formats that are appropriate for use in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, based on model elements of school readiness."

After noting difficulties and issues related to early childhood assessment, the authors set out general principles that should guide both policies and practices for the assessment of young children:

- Assessment should bring about benefits for children.

- Assessments should be tailored to a specific purpose and should be reliable, valid, and fair for that purpose.

- Assessment policies should be designed recognising that reliability and validity of assessments increase with children's age.

- Assessments should be age-appropriate in both content and the method of data collection.

- Assessments should be linguistically appropriate, recognising that to some extent all assessments are measures of language.

- Parents should be a valued source of assessment information, as well as an audience for assessment results.

Four categories of purposes are presented and each purpose is then discussed in terms of the purpose itself, the primary audience(s) implied, the technical requirements, and the age continuum covered, with a closing set of recommendations for policymakers. Four purposes are identified and discussed, with the conclusions drawn with respect to assessment directed to each propose. They are as follows:

- To support learning

Conclusions: "The most important reason for assessing young children is to help them learn. To this end, assessments should be closely tied to preschool and early-grades curriculum and should be a natural part of instructional activities. Policymakers should support the development or provision of assessment materials, to be used instructionally that exemplify important and age-appropriate learning goals. States should also support professional development to help teachers learn to use benchmark information to extend children's thinking.

- For identification of special needs (health and special services)

Conclusions: Screening or a referral procedure should be in place to ensure that children suspected of having a health or learning problem are referred for in-depth evaluation. Given the potential for misuse of cognitive screening measures, states that mandate screening tests should monitor how they are used and should take extra steps to avoid inappropriate uses. IQ-like tests should not be used to exclude children from school or to plan instruction. Often, the need for costly assessment could be eliminated if intensive language and literacy programmes were more broadly available for all of the groups deemed educationally at-risk, e.g., children living in poverty, children with mild cognitive and language disabilities, and children with early reading difficulties.

- For programme evaluation and monitoring trends

Conclusions: The kinds of assessment that teachers use in preschool and the early grades to monitor children's learning are not sufficiently reliable or directly comparable for uses outside the classroom. Before age 5, assessment systems designed to gather data at the state or national level should focus on social indicators that describe the conditions of learning, e.g., the percentage of low-income children who attend quality preschool programmes. Beginning at age 5, it is possible to develop large-scale assessment systems to report on trends in early learning,

but matrix sampling should be used to ensure technical accuracy and at the same time protect individual children from test misuse.

- To assess academic achievement to hold individual students, teachers, and school accountable

Conclusions: There should be no high-stakes accountability testing of individual children before the end of the third grade. This very strong recommendation does not imply that members of the Resource Group are against accountability or against high standards. In fact, instructionally relevant assessments designed to support student learning should reflect a clear continuum of progress in Grades K, 1, and 2 that leads to expected standards of performance for the third and fourth grades. Teachers should be accountable for keeping track of how well their students are learning and for responding appropriately, but the technology of testing is not sufficiently accurate to impose these decisions using an outside assessment.

TAKING STOCK: DEVELOPING INDICATORS FOR ANALYSING COSTS AND BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES. *Compiled by J. Jayanthi Rani Christiana. Report of a Brainstorming Workshop organised by Project ACCESS on 30 September and 1 October 1999. Chennai, India: M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation.*

This document "attempts to crystallise the discussions and highlight the insights that could point the way for policy makers." The discussion is organised into three sections which deal with measuring benefits, measuring costs, and implications for policy. Appendices include a discussion paper that served as the background document for the workshop, as well as several other brief but interesting pieces.

In the discussion of measuring benefits, attention is given to the following areas: programmatic and organisational indicators, child-related indicators, women and family-related indicators, and community-related indicators. Indicators are also classified in relation to inputs, processes, outputs, and impacts. The cost section includes attention to "hidden" costs.

CD-ROM

The World Bank ECD statistical database software

The World Bank has developed ECD statistical database software (on CD-ROM) and a handbook in Portuguese and English. This prototype software was developed using the Brazil ECD database which includes data from the census research and samples developed by the Instituto Brazileiro de Geographia e Estatistica (IBGE), the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health of Brazil. The data available on this CD-ROM include: demographic (total by age group and gender); characteristics of households with children ages 0 to 6; socioeconomic (level of education of parents and p.c. income); enrolment for daycare and preschool, including registration; teacher qualifications and salaries; characteristics of daycare centres and preschools; and child health and nutrition. The software can be used to help programme managers analyse data at national, state and municipal levels. Features such as graphs and maps can help profile and compare the status of young children (0-6) by socioeconomic indicators, health indicators, and preschool enrolment, by municipality, state, or by region. Information on quality of service on daycare and preschool teachers' salaries are also available for analysis. The software is still being tested and will be finalised in time for larger scale dissemination in Brazil in March 2001. For more information, contact:

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CASE STUDIES: EARLY CHILDHOOD INDICATORS

ECCD in the Philippines

Excerpts from the Philippine Country Case Study on ECCD Indicators

FENY DE LOS ANGELES BAUTISTA

In the case of the Philippines, more than a decade and a half of implementing both public and private national early childhood care and development programmes provides a good starting point for reviewing available data, gathering additional information from the various sectors involved in service delivery, and analysing these using the technical guidelines that have been prepared. The process of undertaking the case study involved the organisation of a working group[1] and a research team that worked on gathering an initial data set using the Consultative Group's recommended indicators. The working group met periodically to review data collected at each stage and agree on further expansion or directions to take. When a reasonable amount of data had been gathered from the national and local level, and from both public and private sectors, a workshop was organised to subject the data to scrutiny and discussion. Participants at this workshop contributed information regarding additional data, which should be included in this initial data set, and made recommendations for improvements in data gathering and in the reporting and monitoring processes. After the workshop, the data gathering continued with support from the participating government agencies and private organisations. A report was prepared for dissemination among workshop participants, other national stakeholders, and international partners.

In the Philippines, this report will be used as a basis for continuing work on ECCD indicators. Further discussions with major stakeholders are planned to take place during 2000 and into 2001. Discussions and activities for capacity-building to improve the information management system for ECCD will be undertaken within the context of national and local public programmes led by government agencies, such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Education Culture and Sports, the Department of Health, and the Council for the Welfare of Children.

The preparation of the case study is timely since the Philippines is at a stage of renewing interest and commitment to the expansion of ECCD programmes in the country. Before and beyond the EFA 2000 Assessment processes, there were significant developments in relation to ECCD policies and programmes in the Philippines. In 1994, the Government of the Philippines, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, undertook a sector review on ECCD. This was in preparation for what is now the Philippine ECD Project, a pilot project for

integrated programming in early childhood development currently being implemented in six provinces located in three regions of the country (Reg. 6, 7 and 12). The project is being implemented from 1998-2003.

In 1998, a record number of proposed legislation related to ECCD was submitted for deliberation in both the Lower House and the Senate of the Philippine Congress. The process of consolidating these bills and drafting a final version began in earnest. Senate Bill No. 1438, "The Early Years Act," which promotes a comprehensive and integrative policy for early childhood care and development and creates the mechanisms for developing, implementing, and monitoring policies and programmes, is now in the final stages of the legislative process in the Senate. A corresponding bill is being deliberated in the Lower House. For these significant undertakings, the need for accurate, reliable, comprehensive data about early childhood care and development was underscored. The sector review itself and the process of designing an integrated programme that built on existing health, early education, and social services, required information from national and local levels of government covering both access and quality indicators. In developing legislation and justifying the need for a comprehensive and integrative policy for ECCD, there was also a need for a wide range of indicators. The gaps were evident, then. The EFA 2000 Assessment process comes in close proximity to these two developments, which will both bear significant impact on the fulfilment of the EFA goal of expanding access to ECCD programmes and improving the quality of these programmes.

The Philippines is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child[2] and is committed to fulfilling its obligations as a State Party to the UN CRC. Thus, a child rights framework for child-focused programming has guided both public policy and service provision as well as civil society's involvement in child-focused work. UNICEF has committed the Fifth Country Programme for Children to building and strengthening a child-friendly movement in cooperation with the government and civil society. In the Philippines, the ECCD "sector," in particular, was a pioneer in both preventive and protective actions for children. As early as November 1990, two months after the Philippines became a signatory to the UN CRC, Republic Act No. 6972, "The Barangay-level Total Development and Protection of Children Act," also popularly known as the first "Daycare Act," was enacted. This provided for the establishment of at least one daycare centre in every *barangay* (village). Many non-government organisations who formed the core of pioneering child-focused alliances like Salinlahi, drew their mass base and leadership from non-government organisations focused on community-based ECCD programmes.

Before the late '90s the Government of the Philippines' UNICEF-assisted Country Programme for Children (CPC) applied a life-cycle approach to programming for children, in which the early childhood years were recognised as critical to human development. However, the approach was sectoral rather than integrated (i.e., early childhood education efforts were not necessarily integrated with health and nutrition programmes, or parent education programmes were implemented by different service providers). Since the late 1970s, the various country programmes have developed and expanded the Early Childhood Enrichment Programme (ECEP) which built on and broadened the foundation for the National Daycare Programme, subsequently institutionalised by R.A. No. 6972 or the "Daycare Law" mentioned earlier. Thus, the combination of a rights-based framework in the '90s with a life cycle approach puts early childhood care and development firmly and prominently on the national child development

agenda. It also provides a broader framework for identifying key indicators and setting national goals and targets. However, the challenge continues to be that of ensuring that early childhood care and development is given the priority it deserves on the human and social development agenda as this is translated into concrete programmes for children, families, and communities. To achieve this, accurate information about the developmental status of Filipino children, the status of ECCD programmes and services, and the impact of these programmes on the development of young Filipino children, will be critical. Gathering information and disseminating it in a timely manner to the appropriate users and audiences is another critical aspect of the work; this is why the focus on ECCD indicators is necessary.

The opportunity to develop and arrive at consensus on a set of indicators for ECCD is timely. The Philippines has just concluded a process of developing the Philippine National Development Plan for Children. "Child 21," as this development plan is called, is a "strategic framework for planning programmes and interventions that promote and safeguard the rights of Filipino children." It builds on the previous Philippine Plan of Action for Children (PPAC), promoted in the1990s, but expands the Philippines' vision and goals for improving the quality of life of Filipino children in the first quarter of the new century. However, ECCD indicators identified in both national development plans are not yet consistent with the broader rights-based framework nor fully reflective of the importance of an integrated and holistic perspective in child development. Only children's health and nutritional status, enrolment in daycare and preschool, and school completion *vis-à-vis* attendance in ECCD programmes are identified as key indicators.

Within the context of the consultative processes initiated for this study, there was immediate consensus on the need to expand the indicators and to ensure that a contextual view of the young child's growth and development is achieved by including indicators that look into the physical and psychological qualities of a child's growth and learning environments. There was broad acceptance of an ecological framework, such as that developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner. It was recommended that the proposed indicators be applied within such a framework in order to clarify the dynamics and the interaction between the child and the child's environment at the level of the caregiver/family context and within the broader socio-economic-political framework that affects how children grow, learn, and develop, and that affects the capacity of families and communities to care for their children. It is within the context of this conceptual framework that the Philippines' country case study on ECCD indicators is being undertaken and will be promoted among other stakeholders.

Within such an ecological model of understanding and assessing the quality of a child's environment for growing, developing, and learning, the specific indicators recommended cover many of the various aspects of a child's environment: i.e., the immediate family and household, the community, the institutional community (which includes most organised ECCD services and programmes), and the socio-political framework (child and family-focused legislation and policies). Understanding and monitoring ECCD indicators within a social, economic, cultural, and political context is clearly the common direction of the technical guidelines and the Philippine country study. The Philippine government and child advocates in Philippine civil society are committed to promoting a life-cycle approach to child development programming that is anchored on a child rights framework. This is necessary to ensure that from conception through childhood and adolescence, the emerging and changing needs of children are addressed

and their basic rights to survival, development, special protection and participation are fulfilled and actively promoted.

There are additional recommended indicators to provide more information about the quality of a child's physical environment, particularly at the level of the household and the immediate community. Further, it was acknowledged that there are serious gaps in available updated information about the individual development of young Filipino children (with attention to language, cognitive, and psychosocial dimensions); children's daily routines; the family (i.e., adult-child interaction, care giving practices, parental expectations and aspirations for their young children); and the immediate community (basic physical conditions that affect children's growth and development, and the availability and quality of basic child and family services). It was also noted that it is not as much the absence of tools or resources for conducting research on these areas that explain these "blind spots" as it is the need to improve the coordination of efforts and to establish a more viable and functional monitoring and information system that is linked to service delivery. Ideally, there should be a concerted effort by both government agencies and NGOs to promote more participatory approaches which involve working closely with parents, caregivers, community-based ECCD workers, and teachers as they are the primary actors in the processes of recording or documenting children's development, participation in, or access to ECCD services and programmes.

Given the acceptability of the proposed set of indicators developed by Dr. Robert Myers for the Consultative Group, it was agreed that an exercise in data-gathering for this set of indicators would be an informative one as it would provide a basis for assessing the quality of available information and the information systems for ECCD.

The general trends in the process of information gathering for ECCD indicators are as follows:

- There are major gaps to be filled as far as information needs for each of the sets of indicators concerned, namely: coverage, access and use, programme quality, financing, costs and expenditures, and the developmental status of children. This is true for both public and private sector programmes. Considering the length of time that ECCD programmes have been implemented in the Philippines, information systems for ECCD are relatively underdeveloped.

- A major limitation in all available data is that these are not disaggregated according to gender, age, or socio-economic status, whether at national or local levels.

- There is a need to build viable monitoring and data-gathering mechanisms into existing service-delivery programmes, particularly at the local levels where direct services for young children and families are provided. These data-gathering and information systems should be compatible with and linked to regional and national levels for all government agencies concerned with early childhood care and development. But more importantly, there should be information that is useful to the service providers and programme managers, parents, and caregivers at the level of service delivery closest to children and families.

- Data gathering and monitoring of ECCD programmes offered by the private sector needs to be improved. Since responsibility for registration and monitoring of private ECCD programmes and services are currently lodged in three different agencies (social

services, health, and education), it will be necessary to jointly identify and develop these reporting, data-gathering, and monitoring systems and then delineate responsibilities among the three agencies and their partners in the private sector and in non-government organisations. If standards of quality are to be fulfilled, this is especially critical.

Some special studies were undertaken for the country case study. One study involved 39 municipalities from the different regions of the country by using data gathered through an evaluation undertaken by the Council for the Welfare of Children's Search for Child-Friendly municipalities. Another survey involved the private sector (both registered and unregistered) and this was undertaken by the working group in cooperation with professional associations and NGO networks. The study among private sector and civil society partners for ECCD was also intended to test the waters and gauge their response to one form of information gathering related to ECCD. Similar to earlier surveys conducted by the government for creating a database many years ago, the initial response rate was low without persistent follow-up. But when follow-up was made by the research team and with the help of officers of professional associations like the Association of Early Childhood Educators (AECE), 211 completed survey forms (or 50% of forms distributed) were retrieved by an officer or were mailed back in the postage-paid return envelope. According to ECCD professionals, this has been the typical response among private sector ECCD service providers to past surveys. Among the reasons cited were their apprehensions about disclosing information regarding tuition and other fees, as well as possible repercussions for their operations.

This article introduces indicators which highlight some of the issues that have emerged and point to some important findings, with recommendations for future directions following.

Indicator 1: Enrolment in ECCD Programmes

Aside from national enrolment figures for the daycare service (from the department of social welfare and development, and the department of education) and service coverage, as well as health and nutritional status (from the department of health and the national statistics office), the country case study included information from other sources. The 1999 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by the National Statistics Office provides information on access to ECCD programmes among three- to six-year-olds included in the household survey. This is the only survey that provides disaggregated information according to gender, age, and urban/rural communities. The type of ECCD programme (e.g., daycare, preschool) is not specified. The major gap is ECCD programme access/participation for under-threes. This could be considered in a subsequent MICS that will be conducted for the Fifth Country Programme for Children in the twenty provinces and five cities covered by the UNICEF-assisted programme. Information regarding access to informal child-minding arrangements, organised daycare (public or private), and health services can be included to assess current levels of access to ECCD programmes for under-threes.

Indicator 2: Parental Education

The figure that is reported in the country study's initial data set (at .44%) certainly does not reflect the actual coverage of parent education programmes, but it highlights the fact that this is one particular aspect of ECCD programming for which reporting is neglected. There are parent education programmes offered by the health sector that are conducted by community health

volunteers which, like the Parent Education Service volunteers responsible for PES, are under the supervision of local chief executives. These are also generally not accounted for.

The survey among private service providers included a question about parent education programmes. Thirty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they offered parent education programmes. They considered workshops and training programmes for parents as "parent education" activities. In terms of the frequency of workshops and activities organised specifically for parents, 30% of those who offered programmes indicated that they organised these on a monthly basis and 41% indicated they organised these once a year. Others indicated that quarterly or bi-annual activities for parent education were organised by their institution or organisation.

Indicator 4: Number of children per teacher/caregiver

The teacher-student ratio for five-year-olds in public schools is high at 1:39, and also high for private schools at 1:37 (based on the most recent year available). It is not surprising that most activities for children in kindergarten classes are sedentary whole-group or large-group activities. This allows the teacher to manage a large group of children. However, this cannot be considered a developmentally appropriate practice for five-year-olds in group settings who need more active engagement with people and materials, as well as a balance between whole-group and small-group activities. It is also important to note that this is a high adult-child ratio even for private programmes for which tuition and other fees are paid. The figure for private schools is based on enrolment figures and teaching loads for all preschool classes before grade one and so this includes three- and four-year-olds in "nursery classes." The participation of a second adult, e.g., a parent volunteer or a teacher-aide is very rare, especially for public programmes. Based on observations in private schools, there is usually provision for a second adult in classes with three- and four-year-olds, but classes for five-year-olds are generally larger and with one teacher only.

The adult-child ratio for daycare centres with three- to five-year-olds is also high at 1:35, considering that the daycare worker usually works with two different groups of children within a full working day and that three-year-olds are part of the group. While it is a smaller group compared to the public school preschool classes and closer to the recommended adult-child ratios of 1:25, it is important to take note of the fact that three-year-olds in the group will require more adult attention and supervision if they are to benefit fully from participation in a centre-based programme. In cases where the daycare worker has received additional training, she is able to work with parent volunteers and this improves the adult-child ratio. In other cases, daycare workers organise their programme in such a way that three-year-olds and younger four-year-olds attend the morning session while older four-year-olds and five-year-olds attend the afternoon session.

The reported figures reflect national averages so they do not highlight the situations in many urban centres where the adult-child ratio would be much higher than these figures. For example, very recent data gathered among twelve municipalities in one province of Central Luzon where an ECCD Project called "Kinder Plus" is being implemented shows that the average adult-child ratio for the daycare centres in these twelve rural municipalities is 1:15. However, this should also be seen as a case of "under-enrolment" *vis-à-vis* the population to be served due to factors like lack of parental awareness of the importance of child's participation in organised ECCD, distance from home to centre, and inability to pay for the required monthly contribution. It would

be better to keep track of these situations and reflect them in reporting on ECCD indicators so that concrete steps can be taken to provide a remedy. Group settings for children from birth-six require reasonable adult-child ratios that will ensure children's safety, well-being, and appropriate stimulation from developmentally appropriate learning experiences. These settings should also support adult-child and child-to-child interaction.

Indicator 5: Teacher/Caregiver Qualification

This is another indicator for which accurate and reliable figures based on systematic monitoring are not available. It is not the absence of criteria for defining teacher and caregiver qualifications that is the problem. For the Department of Education, educational attainment or formal training combined with in-service training and work experience in early childhood education programmes is an important criteria. In addition, there are health and psychological standards to be met. However, there is no existing survey among the public kindergarten and grade one teachers that would provide information about the number of teachers who actually fulfil the requirements.

The same is true for the daycare programme. The Department of Social Welfare and Development has always implemented an accreditation and rating system for daycare centres and workers. The accreditation of daycare centres involves an observation/inspection system by social welfare officers using standards developed nationally by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The accreditation system includes an evaluation of the daycare worker. However, data is not available from this accreditation process. This would make a viable starting point for a study on the qualifications of daycare workers who are now in service. Again, a system of monitoring and reporting that is well coordinated with local government units and developed in collaboration with them would be necessary. It is possible that some local government units at either the municipal or provincial level already have information about the qualifications of daycare workers; this can be an appropriate place to start.

The special survey conducted among private schools and NGO programmes for this country case study provides information about the educational qualifications of preschool teachers and administrators. It is interesting to note that a significant number do not have formal educational qualifications specifically for early childhood education or child development, despite the fact that degree programmes in family life and child development or child study have long been offered in colleges and state universities. If most teachers are prepared to work with primary grades or in elementary school, it is not surprising that most kindergarten classes and preschool classes in both the public and private sector are just like grade one classes, generally formal and highly structured. These settings are not developmentally appropriate for four- and five-year-olds, and they would in reality only serve the misguided primary purpose of preparing young children for entry into formal school by teaching them (and treating them) like first grade students. The survey also provides an indication that teachers have little preparation in understanding child development in terms of how children grow, develop, and learn, and how to work with parents and other family members. Again, this is an essential area of preparation for those working with young children.

It would be very helpful in the near future to conduct a national survey of public school teachers and daycare workers through the regional/field offices and the division/provincial offices of the Department of Education and the Department of Social Welfare and Development to determine,

at a minimum, their level of education, background, years of experience, and training history. Given the sensitive nature of their work, the continuing professional development and education of caregivers and teachers in ECCD programmes should be given more attention. It would be easier to justify investments in them, and as a matter of policy, to allocate the necessary resources, if the database on their qualifications, training needs, and work experience is organised and made accessible to policymakers and programme managers. There are about 48,000 teachers and daycare workers, and there are surely more ECCD workers from the programmes implemented by non-government organisations and unregistered private preschools. This number will certainly increase as demand for ECCD services increases. It is now necessary to understand more about them and their needs and qualifications if the country is to move forward in improving the quality of ECCD programmes.

It is also important to reiterate the consensus reached at the workshop on indicators that academic degrees or qualifications on paper do not guarantee that an individual is an effective caregiver/teacher of young children or facilitator. At the same time, it is acknowledged that intensive training and education is required before an individual may be assigned to be responsible for groups of very young children. There is a need to exercise caution in developing standards for teacher and caregiver qualifications that may exclude the cadre of community workers and volunteers, often parents, who have training and experience in implementing ECCD programmes but who may not have the academic qualifications. The refinement of national standards for ECCD programmes should have more accurate information about the current profile of teachers and daycare workers currently in the service in order to develop a realistic and viable framework and approach to the professional development of the ECCD service providers. Setting high standards is one thing on paper and another when it comes to the actual human resource base, as well as in relation to other resources. Balancing "ideal" expectations with the current reality is necessary and provides a basis for developing and implementing a phased or carefully planned career and professional development framework for ECCD workers.

Indicator 6: The Physical Environment

In connection with the child's physical environment, one of the important suggestions made during the workshop was the need to expand the definition of the physical environment to include the child's home and community. The impact of the physical conditions of children's homes and neighbourhoods on their health, interaction within the family and community, learning, and overall development is of course significant. Considering the fact that children under three years old, especially, are generally not participating in any centre-based programmes, it is necessary to expand the definition of this indicator to include the quality of the physical conditions in the home and community.

The Minimum Basic Needs Approach (MBN) to planning social development programmes for poverty alleviation that is being used in the Philippines already includes some indicators related to the physical environment, such as access to water and sanitation facilities. The MBN covers basic needs responding to survival (health, food and nutrition, sanitation, and clothing); security (income and livelihood, shelter, peace and order, and public safety); as well as enabling needs (basic education and literacy, family care, psychosocial needs, and participation in community affairs.) These can be further expanded to include space considerations (size of dwelling *vis-à-vis*

family size), sanitation and waste disposal, safe and open play spaces in the neighbourhood that are accessible to children, and levels of pollution.

Advocacy efforts must be undertaken for the expanded use of the MBN approach and the strategy of Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) in local development planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities for sustainability of poverty alleviation efforts. The CIDSS is designed to be a participatory strategy for developing community development programmes. It is a "grassroots development strategy that starts with families as basic movers of change and progress. It mobilizes non-government organisations, basic sector organisations and the private sector to make meaningful changes in the lives of the poor and the marginalized" (CIDSS Field Manual).

To improve on previous poverty alleviation efforts, the CIDSS, one of the ten Flagship programmes under the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (Republic Act No. 8425) is designed to "synchronize resources, services and interventions of agencies and organisations in specific areas to enhance cooperation and organised efforts" among the stakeholders and primary actors. It applies the four-pronged strategies of community organizing, the total family approach, convergence, and focused-targeting. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (as lead agency) and other member agencies of the Steering Committee identify priority municipalities and then *barangays* (villages) that qualify as CIDSS areas and for which resources are allocated in addition to the regularly available public funds from the national and local government.

The Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) described earlier is the basis for identifying common goals or targets in the local planning process in these CIDSS areas. Thus, the recommended expansion of MBN indicators to include more specific ECCD indicators related to daily care giving arrangements and access to various ECCD services (e.g., daycare, child minding, health, and preschool or other early childhood education programmes) will help to ensure that community planning includes children's access to ECCD services and programmes. It also ensures that the needs of women for child care support services are also addressed. These indicators can be incorporated in the Family Data Survey and the Minimum Basic Needs Form used as tools in CIDSS. This is a natural expansion of a process which is already compatible with the ideal situation in ECCD programming; the essential processes of needs identification, planning and decision-making can be undertaken at the level closest to young children and their caregivers. CIDSS offers a systematic approach to child-focused planning in the communities where it is highly likely that there are more children at-risk for illness, malnutrition, and possibly delayed development due to insufficient resources available to the family and the community.

Indicator 7: Curriculum or Interaction

Beyond the programmes and curriculum defined and articulated on paper, there is now a need to document the wealth of experience that exists in thousands of daycare centres and schools that would give an indication of how these programmes are being implemented. There are many sources of information-caregivers, teachers, parents, volunteers, and children themselves-but a system of documentation has not yet been defined. Training programmes and special programme evaluation activities involving observations of teachers and caregivers at work with young children present opportunities to document how the early childhood curriculum is being implemented in diverse settings.

Since the curriculum in action defines the quality of care giving and learning environments for young children-whatever the ECCD setting-the absence of a system for documentation and dissemination of curriculum and practices in ECCD programmes is a major gap that needs to be filled. Simple observation and rating scales that focus on the more essential elements of curriculum implementation (e.g., adult-child and child-to-child interaction, the kinds of play and other activities that are provided or that are initiated by the children, and the ways that parents participate in the ECCD programme) can be developed for use in ECCD programmes.

One of the recommendations made during the workshop was to develop and implement monitoring systems that would provide more information in a sustained and timely manner on the ways that different kinds of ECCD programmes are actually implementing early childhood curriculum. It was also agreed that the focus must be on "interaction" (adult-child, child-child, and child-environment) rather than on curriculum as it is planned on paper. This is also more appropriate for other types of informal ECCD programmes such as playgroups and home-based child care.

It was also recommended that the early childhood curriculum across the different contexts for provision should be strengthened in terms of supporting children's development of their cultural identity. This enables them to develop awareness and appreciation for their own communities' cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and social identity while also learning to appreciate and respect cultural diversity.

The need to facilitate young children's transition from home to centre- or community-based and school-based settings, as well as their transition from early childhood programmes to primary school, should also be reflected in the indicators. It was suggested that efforts of service providers to initiate partnerships with families and communities could be an indicator for this particular aspect of early childhood care and development.

Within the ASEAN Working Group on ECCD (organised following the initial experts' meeting held in Singapore in July 1999 and attended by country delegations from ASEAN-member countries) there is a collaborative effort to develop various sets of guidelines for licensing and monitoring (assigned to Malaysia), a training framework (assigned to Singapore), developmentally-appropriate practices, and a conceptual framework for ECCD programming (assigned to the Philippines). The Philippine government is hosting the second meeting which will be held in September 2000. The draft documents will be presented and discussed by the delegations; this will be a valuable opportunity to integrate these recommendations for monitoring quality indicators in these proposed guidelines and frameworks that are critical to ECCD programming and policy development.

Policies for ECCD in the Philippines have been developed over time, gradually building on lessons learned from pilot programmes and projects of the agencies involved in service delivery. In terms of both child-focused legislation and national policies and plans, the Philippine government has been able to work towards reconciling these with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, goals and targets for ECCD were still limited and unclear in the Philippine Plan of Action. Separate legislation exists in relation to the daycare programme. For the preschool programme in the public schools there are several department orders. For health there are also specific laws and executive orders.

While in principle the direction taken has always been towards a comprehensive and complementary approach to developing policies and programmes, the fragmented nature of the government bureaucracy and the separation between the public and private sector understandably posed challenges for the realisation of this approach. In addition, the past decade was a transition period for the decentralization process which sought to increase autonomy of local government units and shifted responsibility for the delivery of basic social services to these local government units at the *barangay* (village), city, or municipality levels. In principle, this is the best possible arrangement because it brings the responsibility for programme management and actual service delivery to the levels of government closest to young children and families. However, to make this work and ensure effective delivery of basic services-including ECCD services-there is a greater need for capacity-building and social mobilization aimed at local political leaders as well as a functional management information system. There is a great deal of variation across provinces, municipalities, and cities, as well as across national government agencies, in terms of the amount of resources, technical knowledge, management skills, and political will needed to ensure that these are in place. At this point, it would be timely to study and recommend appropriate amendments to the Republic Act No. 7160 (the Local Government Code of 1991) which will strengthen the local government's capacity and commitment to implement quality ECCD services and programmes. The Local Government Code is now being reviewed by both houses of Congress with the intention of introducing amendments following an eight-year period of implementing this law.

The proposed Senate Bill No. 1438, "The Early Childhood Care and Development Act," precisely seeks to facilitate the process of coordination and convergence of services (from planning to implementation to monitoring) from the national to local levels of government. The proposed ECCD law builds on an existing bureaucratic structure by expanding the membership of the Board of the Council for the Welfare of Children (i.e., increasing representation from civil society and the professional ECCD sector). This Coordinating Council for ECCD will be responsible for consolidating policies and defining national standards through consultative and participatory processes. It also seeks to promote and strengthen partnerships between families, public and private service providers, non-government organisations, and academic institutions so that each can contribute to the expansion and improvement of ECCD programmes.

The new medium-term development plan of the Philippine government and a new Plan of Action for Children, "Plan 21," have both put more emphasis on the importance of ECCD programmes, calling for more attention to improving access and quality. However, the challenge remains the same: how to ensure effective monitoring of whether goals and targets for service provision are met, and that programme standards are implemented and technical support provided. In this process, both the quality of supervision and the information systems in place are critical.

Indicator 10: Costs or average expenditure per child on ECCD

It is not possible to establish a trend from the period 1990 to 1999 (coverage of EFA 2000 Assessment) because the information available is not complete, particularly in relation to central office allocations. However, for purposes of this case study, all available information on expenditures related to existing ECCD programmes were solicited from the different agencies mainly to provide some information about costs based on available data. Clearly, this is one of

the major blind spots in the data, and it is not possible to accurately establish per capita cost per child per daycare centre or any other ECCD programme. This area clearly needs urgent attention.

In the absence of information from national agencies, the case study used the data from a survey of thirty-nine cities and municipalities located in different parts of the country to provide some information regarding local government expenditures for ECCD. The survey included an item on expenditures for children's programmes. The research team for the case study was allowed access by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) to the raw data for this survey, which included forms completed by the cities and municipalities, and the rating sheets and evaluation forms from the jury that was tasked to select the nominees and winners for this "Search for Child-friendly Municipalities."

It was agreed during the discussions that, ideally, the budget allocations for all ECCD services provided by social services, health, and education should be documented and analysed. At present, the main problem is that allocations for ECCD are not disaggregated nor identified as a specific budget item. There is a need for the national agencies to define specific roles, functions, workloads, and time allocations of the personnel in central offices who provide technical support, who participate in policy discussions, and who undertake staff work or preparatory work for programme development and monitoring. If these cannot be separated for budget allocation purposes, documentation can focus on actual expenditures at the end of a budget cycle.

Resource allocation should be disaggregated by geographical area, source of funds (i.e., local funds, national General Appropriations Act (GAA), donations from the private sector, Overseas Development Aid, and other sources), and according to purpose (i.e., administration or programme operations.)

Local government units (LGUs) are the major service providers, or are responsible for actual programme implementation, and should be responsible for the generation of funds and accountable for allocation and use of resources. The way they do this will indicate whether they are making ECCD a priority for their own municipality or city. At the local level, occasional surveys involving a sampling of municipalities and cities will provide useful information. There is also a need to differentiate between regular budget allocations, i.e., those included each year, and special allocations.

It was also recommended that the costs and expenditures for private sector programmes (such as community-based ECCD programmes, workplace-based daycare, ECCD programmes linked to orphanages, and other child-focused institutions) be monitored and documented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and by the Department of Education for private preschools and early childhood education facilities.

Developmental Status of Children (Indicators 13 to 16)

This subset of indicators has very significant implications and is of tremendous value for both programme evaluation impact and programme development and planning at various levels. However, studies to document the actual developmental status of Filipino children of different ages and from socio-economic backgrounds have not been prioritised in the past decade. There are existing tools (such as the Child Development Checklist of the Daycare Programmes), Preschool Readiness Tests, and First Grade Readiness tests administered in public schools, as

well as standardized screening tools like the Metro Manila Denver Screening Test (MMDST, a Philippine version of the Denver Developmental Screening Test), and some studies have been conducted involving these. However, large-scale comprehensive studies on the developmental status of Filipino children have not been conducted since the 1980s when the Child and Youth Research Centre conducted an impact evaluation study for the Early Childhood Enrichment Programme from 1983-1987.[3]

For the Philippine ECD Project (funded through a joint World Bank-Asian Development Bank loan), a developmental assessment package has been developed and is being pilot-tested in the participating municipalities. The Development Assessment Package includes a screening tool (the Philippine ECD Checklist) for infants and children aged birth to six, hearing/vision screening tools, growth monitoring charts, and home screening tools. From the period 1999-2001, this assessment package will be administered among groups of children in these provinces and in urban and rural communities that are not participating in the ECD Project. The tools in the package will also be refined and norms established at various stages of use within the ECD Project. An implementation plan was prepared with support from UNICEF during the project preparation stage. The implementation plan recommends a matrix sampling design for the use of the Philippine ECD Checklist in selected communities and ECCD settings. This allows for a more realistic level of participation for individual children and ECCD workers that does not overburden them yet yields sufficient information about the specific domain or dimension of child development. This statistical technique precludes the use of assessment results for decision-making related to individual children and is a safeguard against possible misuse of the results of this child development assessment study.

The developmental assessment package and the Philippine ECD Checklist are also being used on a pilot-test basis together with parent education materials developed on the basis of the developmental screening tools within the context of "Kinder Plus." This ECCD project is being implemented by the Department of Education, the Office of Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta, the Community of Learners Foundation and the provincial government of Nueva Ecija. A research project in cooperation with UNICEF-East Asia Pacific Regional Office and a multi-disciplinary team of independent researchers is being conducted. Information about the developmental status of children from this province and from Metro Manila representing ages birth-six, male-female, urban-rural, and three socio-economic groups will be available by the September 2000. Sampling size is 900 children.

It is important to make a distinction between the purposes of assessment in order to develop a comprehensive profile on the status of Filipino children at a specific stage in their lives, for example, upon entry into formal school, for policy making or programme evaluation and accountability, or in order to assess individual children and their needs as they exist within ECCD programmes to improve specific interventions and ensure effective responses to their emerging needs.

A word of caution must also be included here regarding the use of child development assessment especially when linked to the development of national standards or programme accountability that may inadvertently have harmful effects on young children, especially in the early years including the age of entry to primary school. Standards for reliability and validity are more difficult to meet for accountability purposes because standards for technical accuracy must be

met at the lowest unit of reporting, i.e., the caregiver, teacher, parent volunteer, or health volunteer. At this point, the capacity to administer assessment or screening tools with the required level of technical skills cannot be guaranteed. There is a need to ensure a careful match between tools and purposes of assessment, sampling procedures, and design and technical standards for these; it is also necessary to invest in capacity building for these purposes. There is a need to protect children from being labeled or tracked according to abilities-even before they enter formal school system-where the practice should also be a matter for debate. The cultural relevance and developmental appropriateness of the tools, including the preschool readiness tests used in grade one and which are mostly pencil and paper tests, are especially important criteria. Even if Filipino is the national language, given the diversity in cultural and linguistic groups, there are significant numbers of Filipino children whose native and dominant language from birth up to school age is not Filipino. For them, Filipino and English would be a second or third language.

Children's familiarity with paper and pencil tests also assumes prior exposure to these and similar activities like drawing with crayons. For some children in specific communities that do not have access to organised forms of ECCD nor these materials, these should not be made the sole basis for assessing their language and cognitive skills.

A recommendation was also made to include more social indicators in assessing the developmental status of children, and to rely mainly on these particularly for young children (birth-three) and for children living in conditions that are considered "high-risk" because of poverty and other social conditions. Social indicators are indirect measures as applied to this specific indicator on Child Development. They can be used to assess the adequacy of services to children or the conditions in their environment. Since the accurate and reliable assessment or screening of young children from birth to age three who are not served by centre-based programmes will be difficult to ensure given the current state of service delivery for this age group and the capacity of service providers at the *barangay* levels, it would be better to develop and rely on alternative social indicators. These can include indicators for the quality of care that a young child could receive and encompass health (numbers of mothers with children below age two who have access to pre-natal and post-natal care, infants and children with regular access to health care, percentage of children for each age group who are immunised); nutrition and psychosocial development (conditions of risk for any form of child abuse or neglect due to caregiver or family factors); and patterns of play and adult-child interaction for language and cognitive stimulation. These social indicators will also complement and therefore should be linked to those recommended for indicators six (physical environment) and seven (interaction).

A coordinated research and development agenda for ECCD can be promoted jointly by the Council for the Welfare of Children and the National Economic Development Authority in cooperation with the different line agencies involved in service delivery or programme development (Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Education Culture and Sports, Department of Health) and the National Census and Statistics Office so that existing resources and expertise for conducting special studies involving specific groups of children and caregivers, and specific ECCD programmes and services, can be maximised. Specialised research institutions such as the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) which is responsible for the National Nutrition Survey should also be involved. The Philippine ECD Project has a research and development agenda that seeks to fill in these serious gaps particularly

in terms of information about how young Filipino children are growing, learning, and developing. This research agenda was developed during the project preparation stage after the identification of major gaps in information in ECCD programming such as those also identified in this country case study.

The UNICEF-supported Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (see p.9), which is implemented by the National Statistics Office offers possibilities for establishing a cost-effective approach to gathering data at the household level to complement other national surveys such as the National Nutrition Survey and the Minimum Basic Needs Surveys, used in the CIDSS project areas. Information gathered through these surveys can inform programme and policy development. The other important contribution from the UNICEF experience is its organisational mechanism for coordination which already involves most of the key players for public ECCD programming. Coordination is through a "Knowledge Network Committee" composed of the following agencies: Office of Planning Service (Department of Education); National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women; Public Health Services (Department of Health); National AIDS/STD Prevention and Control Programme (Department of Health); Council for the Welfare of Children; National Nutrition Council; Institute for Labour Studies (Department of Labour and Employment); and the Early Childhood Development Project (Department of Social Welfare and Development). The MICS was undertaken as part of the commitment of the Government of the Philippines and UNICEF in monitoring the achievement of the World Summit Goals for Children and Women. Given UNICEF's renewed commitment to ECCD and the fact that ECCD now occupies a priority position in UNICEF's global agenda for children, it would be timely to 1) broaden the coverage of the MICS to include more specific information related to ECCD; 2) expand UNICEF support in order to facilitate the coordination of efforts by the various government agencies; and 3) set-up an improved, systematic, and highly functional monitoring and information system on the ECCD indicators identified here. The effort to identify more ECCD indicators and improve the information and monitoring system for these indicators should not be seen as isolated from other child-focused indicators; many of the recommended indicators such as those related to child development, caregiver characteristics, parent education, and the child's environment are also relevant to assessing the status of other family members, including women and older children in the family. Furthermore, by assisting the Philippine government to improve its monitoring and reporting system for ECCD indicators will also significantly contribute to improving the Philippine government's capacity to effectively monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the work involved in identifying and selecting indicators for early childhood care and development must be seen as integral to fulfilling the State's and society's commitment to making children's rights to survival, development, special protection and participation a reality for all Filipino children. Considering that 37% of the Filipino child and youth population are aged birth to six, this must be considered a priority. How we manage to care for and educate about 12.5 million young children must be seen as essential within the broader context of human and social development. A more comprehensive, in-depth understanding and analysis is necessary of their developmental status and their life conditions, the quality of life that their families and communities can afford to provide them, and the quality of services and support systems that the public sector and civil society delivers. We can only achieve our goals of

expanding access to early childhood care and development services and improving the quality of these programmes if we know enough about the children they are intended for, their caregivers, and the frontline workers or service providers.

The processes involved in monitoring and informing ourselves for purposes of accountability, for enhancing the capacity of the human resources, for evaluating programme quality and determining whether the standards that have been set are indeed being met have still to be initiated in some cases, and refined and sustained in most cases. As we learned from this exercise in gathering data related to the suggested ECCD indicators, there are many blind spots and many pieces of the puzzle are still missing. Whether it is at the national level or at the local levels of government, a serious effort must be made to integrate these processes within the course of regular reporting requirements linked to programme planning and development and service delivery. We can more effectively and systematically mobilise the necessary political support and generate the resources for ECCD programmes and services if the information is generated from and then made available to all local government officials, programme managers and supervisors, policymakers, advocates and most importantly, the service providers and caregivers.

These processes must be brought as much as possible to the levels of the child's growth and learning environment that are closest to children and their caregivers. It is evident from the country study that much of the information that is missing relates to: children's developmental status (particularly cognitive, social-emotional, language development), programme quality (qualification of caregivers and teachers, curriculum, activities), costs and expenditures. To learn about child development and the actual practices of caregivers and teachers, participatory approaches should be applied for gathering information about young children and about the service providers. The tools for information gathering must be designed to involve those who are most directly involved in caring for and teaching young children as well as those responsible for supporting and educating the caregivers (e.g., direct supervisors, trainers). For example, child development assessment tools should be linked to parent education programmes and materials. They cannot simply be academic nor bureaucratic exercises because they will not be sustained nor will they serve the most meaningful purpose for young children and their caregivers.

There are promising initial efforts to move in this direction. For example, in the World Bank-ADB funded, Philippine ECD Project, the Developmental Assessment Package includes tools for home screening, growth monitoring charts, and an ECD Checklist which covers all the dimensions of child development. This package is designed to be used by the different service providers, e.g., health workers, rural health midwives, daycare workers, and child development workers. A simple reference for parents written in Filipino entitled "Ang Buhay ni Bimboy" (The Life of Bimboy), which follows a child's development from birth through age six, has been recently revised to be consistent with this developmental assessment package. Another ECCD Project, called "Kinder Plus," is similarly designed to promote an integrated approach to ECCD and involves working closely with local government units. It is a partnership involving the office of Senator Teresa Aquino-Oreta, who is the primary sponsor of the Early Childhood Care and Development Act; the Department of Education; Community of Learners Foundation (a non-government organisation); and the provincial and municipal governments of Nueva Ecija province, Tarlac, Zambales, and Bulacan. In this project, the same developmental assessment package designed for the WB-ADB funded ECD Project is being introduced through the training programme for daycare workers, rural health midwives and community health volunteers, and

public school kindergarten teachers. In addition, developmental screening kits were provided for their use; age-specific brochures (from birth to age six) with pictorial versions of the Philippine ECD checklist in Filipino and suggestions for parents related to each dimension of child development were also developed. These are being used by the service providers in their work with parents through the daycare centres, the health centres and the schools. This is an effort to involve both parents and service providers in monitoring individual children's development and gradually introducing these records for use in public ECCD programmes. But most importantly, they are being introduced and used as tools for educating parents, other caregivers, and the service providers, rather than as simply reporting requirements or research-linked tools for information gathering.

Often, the reporting requirements are not seen as relevant or meaningful because they are not used within the context of enhancing the quality of work or supporting providers in solving problems or addressing programme needs. For the Philippine ECD Project, a planning tool (also available as computer software) was designed to serve as an aid for the municipal ECD Teams in preparing their project proposals to participate in the ECD Project. This requires gathering data at the *barangay* (village) levels to be consolidated at the municipal level. Careful data-gathering was a requirement for their participation in the project and the pilot municipalities were able to comply.

For the Kinder Plus Project, several activities were organised as part of the local planning process. Some of these were designed to enhance the skills of the local team, consisting of the service providers, supervisors, and municipal planning and development officers in data-gathering and analysis. Disaggregated child population data for every *barangay* (village) in the participating municipalities is now available even for a remote rural municipality like Cuyapo in Nueva Ecija with a population of about 60,000 and which is still inaccessible through the main national highway of the province. The daycare workers and the health workers were involved in gathering this data and the social welfare officer coordinated the effort. Each of the municipalities has also worked on maps of existing services and maps of households with children aged birth-six that will be used to determine priorities in planning for expansion and improvement of their ECCD programmes. A profile of daycare workers, teachers, and health workers is also being developed for the participating municipalities and for the province, which will be used to determine training needs and partly assess programme quality. A widely used rating scale, "Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale" (ECERS), has been adapted and is being used during site visits and observations of daycare centres and kindergarten classes. These are all being introduced in the course of the regular programme implementation activities and as part of the local planning process. It is interesting to note how seriously and diligently the frontline workers and their programme managers and supervisors have approached the task of data-gathering since the time they were helped to understand the importance of this information for improving their ECCD programmes.

Perhaps what is most significant about these initiatives is that they offer a sense of hope that it is indeed possible to begin to address the need for reliable, quantitative, and qualitative data so that we can learn more about how young Filipino children are growing and learning, how their caregivers are able to provide the quality of care that they need for optimum growth, development, and protection, and how programmes are responding to their needs. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, perhaps if we focus our energies on working closely with families and

communities and those responsible for supporting them, such as local government leaders, public servants, or NGOs in community-based programmes, we may after all achieve our objective of "counting what really counts" and make sure that even if we cannot count everything that really counts, we can still make these aspects of early childhood care and development more visible and document them in ways that will help to make a qualitative difference in the lives of young Filipino children.

1 The working group was composed of Dr. Cecile Florencio of U.P. College of Home Economics, Assistant Secretary Lourdes Balanon (for Policies and Programs) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Dr. Teresita Inciong of the Bureau of Elementary Education, Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Feny de los Angeles-Bautista, Consultative Group International Secretariat and Community of Learners Foundation.

3 The research team of the Child and Youth Research Centre, which was headed by Dr. Luz Palattao-Corpus with Dr. Domingo Nunez, conducted the study which at post-test involved 4,875 children aged 0-6 from thirteen regions of the country. Various instruments were used: CYRC Child Development Schedules, school records, checklist on social adjustment patterns and Vineland Social Maturity Scale.

Developing Indicators for Early Childhood Development: A Contribution to the Learning Process from the Profiles Project in Jamaica

SIAN WILLIAMS

"The original idea behind the Profiles Project was that at about the age of six, at the moment a child enters primary schooling, it would be useful to collect data both as representative of the ACTUAL STATUS OF CHILDREN *at this important point of change in their lives* (A PICTURE *of the accumulation of their development to this point) and as a baseline for looking at what happens to them in school.*

"Recognising that the causes for potential difficulty in school largely reside in environmental deficiencies rather than in deficits existing within the child, it would be equally useful to develop PROFILES OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS *in which children find themselves so that* CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN RELATION TO AND IN INTERACTION WITH THEIR LEARNING CONTEXTS."

These two simple and elegant ideas, spoken by Bob Myers six-and-a-half years ago, provided the impetus for and the overarching goal of what has become known as the Profiles Project. The history of the Profiles Project is in fact a story of trial and error in setting up a system to monitor the status of children and their learning environments at about age six. The project has gone through three phases, and we are close to the end of the third, which includes a feasibility study (1994) funded by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development; a pilot study funded by UNICEF Jamaica (1995); the current phase, which is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (1997-2001), as a project to validate data collection instruments and incorporate them in data collection systems and to create a monitoring system than can generate profiles on a national sample of five- and six-year-olds at appropriate intervals in time.

Why do we want a monitoring system in Jamaica? We have five purposes that we would like to address:

- To enable a multi-disciplinary approach to the planning of interventions for children.
- To provide national pictures to lead, focus, and evaluate policy.
- To identify groups of children with specific needs.
- To support appropriate curriculum development and tools.
- To compare children's development, over time, in the specific context of Jamaica.

The Profiles approach offers both an addition to, and a whole new way of using, the systems we currently have in place for generating information on children. Profiles have the capacity to show us how several pieces of information about a child's development interrelate not only with each other but also with other information about the child's learning environments. Not only have we tried to ensure an interrelated approach within and between the Profiles, we have also tried to maintain an intersectoral approach in the management and development of the Project.

The way we have done this is to establish a formal inter-institutional steering committee, resulting in some of the most interesting inputs and outcomes of the Project in this third phase. The committee representing the relevant government ministries (health, education, planning, statistics) and research agencies (the University's Department of Child Health, the Caribbean Child Development Centre, and MICO College's Care Centre, a special needs diagnostic and treatment facility) meets quarterly to ensure consensus at the policy level across the social sector on all aspects of the project's work. It has proven to be an interdisciplinary mechanism which should continue beyond the life of the Project, offering an essential vehicle for considering intersectoral issues and for devising integrated strategies for tackling them.

This case study will describe three critical lessons we have learned during this third phase that are pertinent to the *identification and use of indicators in a monitoring system*, lessons that caused us to radically rethink the route we chose originally and to change the Project's methodology. They are the kind of lessons that I wish I had learned before setting out on the Profiles journey!

In retrospect, as with all good but painful lessons, you really wonder why you had to learn them in practice and not in advance. I do hope that in sharing them, you will be able to make more informed choices about the direction you take next than we were able to do at the beginning of our project.

Lesson One: Only a validated approach produces valid indicators.

The first lesson was one in rigour and methodology, for which we needed specialist assistance with the use of diagnostic tests and instrument development.

For the feasibility study in 1994, we undertook an extensive literature review of relevant local, regional, and international research on children, families, learning, and the environment. The findings were to serve two purposes: the first was to find out what instruments had been used in the past and to determine whether we could adapt them for the Profiles. The second was to identify indicators that we needed to consider.

We held two workshops in 1994 that successfully mapped a huge terrain of literature, identified instruments used in relevant research endeavours-some validated, some not (this proved critical later on)-determined domains for indicators, and defined ages for profiling, methods, and locations. Over 120 indicators were identified, and two approaches to collecting data were taken: the sample (or cross-sectional) study and the development of and addition to an ongoing system of assessment or surveillance. The second workshop developed ideas for methodology and of data collection, and brought us to ask the questions, Should we do a one-time pilot study? Should we take an annual assessment of children on entry into preschool (at age four)? Should we build a picture over time by studying a sample of six- to seven-year-olds through a national sample, or should we take an annual assessment of children at the point of entry to primary school?

So far so good. The terrain was mapped. There was no doubt that the feasibility study was on the right track and had identified creative approaches and possible methodologies in the Jamaican context. It was the next step that proved to be erroneous. Three assumptions were made that were ill-founded and subsequently very costly. Those assumptions were: first, that valid and reliable instruments *could* be developed from scratch at that time in the Jamaican context; second, that

the instruments, once developed, *could* be put to use in a pilot without *first* being tested and normed on a sizeable population (at least 1600 children) to confirm validity of assumptions in creating them; and third, that data *could* be collected by using instruments which grouped items according to constructs that we developed but had not been validated.

What was erroneous about these assumptions? First, instrument development requires specialist-trained expertise that the Project did not have access to at that time. It requires very different skills to construct instruments that measure and assess children's development as a component of overall human development than it takes to construct those instruments used in the development of questionnaires and census type forms. Second, even if the Project had had the expertise required in instrument development, instruments, once developed, have to be normed on a population sample of at least 800 boys and 800 girls to provide the evidence, with the gender balance, that the instrument can produce reliable information consistently. Third, each instrument should group items to be measured in clusters, following either cluster or factor analysis to ensure standardization of the measures used and validity of the constructs developed.

These assumptions meant that the Project did not go through the necessary process or follow the necessary order of steps within a process to arrive at a verifiable set of indicators. The process the Project went through was as follows: it reviewed the literature, drew up and agreed on indicators in two workshops, devised instruments, and then went straight to the pilot stage. What it *should* have done was to review the literature in order to establish a theoretical basis, devise research questions, anticipate indicators, and research and select validated instruments to answer the questions (and, as no relevant validated instruments normed on the Jamaican population existed at that time, validated instruments normed on broadly similar populations elsewhere should have been selected and adaptations made to ensure cultural appropriateness). Only then, under the direction of trained assessors licensed to undertake research of this nature, the Project could have commenced data collection. As a result, the Project's pilot study proved to be of no value to the development of the Profiles. Incidentally, this third phase of the Project cost eight months of time and money.

The implications for the Project were that we had to go back to the literature and begin to rethink some of our earlier assumptions. We identified the theoretical basis on which we were basing the Profiles, identified research questions, and hypothesized possible indicators. From that new basis, specialist assistance was sought from the Department of Child Health at the University of the West Indies to select and use validated instruments that, with adaptations made for Jamaica, would produce the reliable information needed for constructing indicators. With this timely intervention by, and subsequent collaboration with, the Department of Child Health, all areas but one of data collection for the Profiles were salvaged and re-tooled.

Lesson Two: Only a reliable data collection process produces reliable information.

This was a lesson in what happens when you "put the cart before the horse."

For many good reasons, we had looked at methodology for collecting data at the very start of the feasibility study. The main reason was that we wanted the monitoring system to be embedded as far as possible into existing systems of data collection so that we were making economical use of human and technical resources and building on current expertise, systems, and experience. Another reason was to promote ownership of the data and participation in its collection by those

for whom the data would be most valuable for in planning. Yet another reason was to create sustainable structures from the outset. In this way we aimed not to set up a project which would need to be integrated later (or be left marginalised) but rather to assimilate it piece by piece over its lifetime so that it was completely integrated into the country's systems by the time the project term concluded. Economy, ownership, sustainability—we *thought* these objectives could be met by training existing personnel and adapting existing systems *from the outset*.

Once again, our error was to make assumptions which proved to be unworkable at the implementation phase. Government personnel (experienced data collectors and interviewers on statistical surveys, as well as officers experienced in monitoring early childhood services) were trained to use the instruments and methodologies developed in the pilot project. However we were unable to put mechanisms in place which would ensure reliability. The implementation of the Profiles Project's instruments by existing government personnel raised three questions in terms of reliability: 1) the issue of inter-rater reliability was critical as we could not observe the data collectors in the field under the laws of the country governing confidentiality in the collection of information; 2) the number of officers involved in data collection (over seventy in the case of early childhood environments) made inter-rater reliability almost impossible to orchestrate let alone achieve; and 3), the instruments employed a variety of methodologies (observations of dynamics between parents and children, rating of observations of quality or lack of it in early childhood settings) which demanded a range of skills and interpretative abilities in the data collectors-skills and abilities which may not have been present, and which would certainly vary in accuracy between persons.

In completely rethinking the data collection process, we had to "pull back" as many areas of research as we could at this advanced stage in the Project and create a research team (eight researchers) who, for all but two of the areas in the Project, were trained and supervised over a seven-month period to collect all the data. Of the two areas remaining-it was too late to re-tool the study of early childhood environments as it was well underway; we have yet to analyse that data and see how much is usable. We have also selected a small team to undertake the study of primary environments later in the year.

The research team has concluded its work, the findings have been analysed, and the indicators identified. This is the stage at which the Project can begin to see the usefulness of its endeavours in the contribution it can make to the development of a monitoring system using indicators of quality.

Based on the selection of key indicators identified, the research team Director is now devising instruments for monitoring child status and the status of learning environments. The monitoring instruments are being designed *specifically* for use by caregivers, teachers, health workers, and government personnel at all levels. These instruments will enable the collection of data in a simple observation checklist of the indicators developed. They are intended to be user friendly, and, critically, they will be brief. Key indicators to be used are those that have been identified as *making the difference* for child outcomes in academic achievement, cognition, and behaviour. That is precisely what we wanted to find out-what really makes the difference. Relationships between indicators of socio-economic status, family structure, family functioning and parental well-being, home environment, external environment, health and nutrition status, and the outcome variables of children's achievement, cognition, and behaviour have been identified. For

example, the research has identified that of all the possible indicators of family structure, it is the biological father's education, the biological mother's education, and the position of the child within the family that make the difference for the child's academic achievement and cognition. It is not the biological parent's presence in the home, or the relationship between the biological parents or even the phenomenon of "child shifting" which makes the difference. Regarding outcomes for a child's behaviour, whilst there is no significant relationship between parental education and a child's behavioural problems, there is a significant relationship between parental education and a child's behavioural *strengths*.

The monitoring instruments are based on the data required to inform and update the Profiles, and to monitor changes and developments in individual children or in their learning environments. As you can see from the example above (regarding family structure) ,some indicators influencing quality could be incorporated easily into management information systems once the indicators have been identified as significant for child outcomes. Data in this example is factual, does not require observation or special measurement, and can be collected routinely in a household survey or any other census type process. I turn to this area of data collection systems and data management in the next section. However, data to be collected using indicators of quality (such as those on family functioning and parental well-being) have to be collected on the monitoring instruments by those who have frequent contact with a child as they require the use of observation over time to monitor changes, developments, and possible trends. In addition, we estimate that every three to five years it will be necessary to update the indicators selected by putting a research team into the field to re-run the research and by testing process to confirm the validity or update the key indicators.

Lesson Three: Only a user-friendly data monitoring and management system will be used.

Luckily for the Profiles Project the lessons were not so painful to learn in the data monitoring and management system area, however, lessons are still being learned and that the learning has not yet been put into practice.

Ultimately the value of the Profiles rests in their use and application-for planning interventions, for conceptualizing and "envisioning" the state of children and their learning environments, for identifying special needs and special areas of neediness, and for informing the development of the curriculum and child-centred learning methodologies.

The Project's steering mechanism-the inter-institutional steering committee-has already been described as providing an excellent means for doing inter-sectoral work, a mechanism that should continue in the interests of maintaining interdisciplinary discussion and decision-making.

However, the data monitoring and management system itself into which Profiles are assimilated must be user friendly-personnel in management, training, service monitoring, child health and development work, teaching, and research must be motivated to access the information and find it not only helpful but critical as a tool for planning.

Our options narrowed down to one: a system "in evolution" that connects the various arms of government and allows for primary data to be considered alongside secondary data. Jamaica's Institutional-Based Monitoring System (IBMS) was designed in 1989 to measure changes in the standard of living of vulnerable groups by using a select group of indicators for health and

education. It was very successful in establishing a low-cost system for utilising data collection processes to obtain information from the health and education sectors. However, it did not realise the objective of making data available for policymakers and planners to monitor the effects of how the monitoring system might be used at the local level. It was reviewed, with UNICEF support, in 1994 to assess the indicators collected in the existing system, and to identify and establish new ones with a view to integrating health and education indicators in a single report. One of the findings of the review was that regular use of the data had been limited because of inadequate dissemination of the reports and the fact that the reports did not provide further insights regarding policy and programme monitoring.

Vulnerable groups monitored in the IBMS included the young child less than five years, the school child, and the woman of child-bearing age. However, as the review pointed out,

> *"The status of vulnerable groups is the outcome or end stage of a number of processes. There are several intermediary events that can and should be monitored. By doing so, it should be possible to intervene sufficiently early to prevent deterioration in the status of vulnerable groups. A proposed combination of process indicators together with outcome and impact indicators to provide a reasonably broad database for analysis of trends in social programmes and social conditions should facilitate policy and programmatic decisions."*

The IBMS evolved into the Social Indicators Monitoring System (SIMS) in 1995, which, among other improvements, promised up-to-date information, special reports suggesting lines of action, identification of simple uses of data at the local level, appealing and user-friendly report formats, and the inclusion of Profiles once complete. Unfortunately, SIMS lies dormant-increased workload in the planning departments of the Ministries and the Planning Institute of Jamaica have meant that this mechanism, which would ultimately make everyone's lives easier, simply did not get off the ground.

Another evaluation is currently underway, this time of SIMS, utilising UNICEF funding for the second time. We cannot seem to create and then develop and sustain a system that we can handle, use easily, and focus effectively on for our own country purposes. We are building a large dream of a system when we are not yet using a range of inter-related data regularly as a basis for planning. Some refining of the original IBMS with a data link-up between the Ministries would go some way to providing a solid basis within which to assimilate Profiles indicators and design user-friendly access and reports. Despite a number of advocacy efforts, and in light of the fact that the Project will conclude in eight months time, we seem to be just as far off as we were six years ago from having a system in which to institutionalise Profiles.

Developing Indicators for Early Childhood Development

The Profiles Project has just recently produced the draft report on the findings for the child status profile and for the profile of the learning environment in the home. (Two more learning environments have also been completed-the preschool and the primary school-later in 2000). In October, we commence a follow-up study of the original national sample of 200 children to see how well or otherwise the children have fared in their first year of primary school.

The Director of the research study has identified indicators of socio-economic status, family structure, family functioning and parental well-being, home environment, external environment, and health and nutrition status, and has also identified the relationship between the indicators and the outcome variables of children's achievement, cognition and behaviour. When you reach this point in the process, in fact it is an anti climax! It has been a huge process commanding rigour and attention to the minutest detail (in instrument adaptation and use, in inter-rater reliability and team management, in data cleaning and inputting), and to the trained capacity to handle both large amounts of information and the technical processes required for sophisticated analysis. At the end of nearly a twenty-month process we have identified less than one page of key indicators from seven pages we originally hypothesised as "possibles". These indicators will become the key indicators for the para-professional monitoring instruments, and also for the monitoring system (once established).

The Profiles Project has already received a commitment from the government for future funding. Based on the findings of this research study there are two additional studies of learning environments in preschool and primary school taking place, as well as a follow-up study of the children, and we expect to see some indications of trends and new research questions emerge. We will recommend to the government at what intervals (probably every three to five years) this study approach should be used to confirm the selection of key indicators in use in the monitoring system, and to determine when new ones should be added. The sustainability of this initiative to develop Profiles and the usefulness of the information that they will be generating have yet to be put to the test!

A more detailed account of the implications for policy in Jamaica is being compiled as part of the Consultative Group's Indicators Project. The choices made in Jamaica regarding methodology for data collection and selection of indicators will be examined in light of the recent literature and international developments in this area. The Jamaica experience provides a number of lessons learned about how to set up a monitoring system based on indicators which are useful and meaningful for a country at a given point. Furthermore, it provides a solid baseline on which to monitor change and development over time, based on indicators which have internal rather than external value. The Jamaica Case Study will provide an analysis of this experience as a contribution to the overall learning in the CG Indicators Project.

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Also presented at: Conference 2000, Early Childhood Care, Education and Development in the Caribbean, Jamaica Grande, Ochos Rios, July 11, 2000. For more details on the Project and its outcomes please do not hesitate to contact the Project at the address above.

In Search of Early Childhood Care and Development Indicators: A Contribution to the EFA 2000 Assessment-The Namibian Case[1]

BARNABAS OTAALA, Ed.D.

The five conveners for Education for All (EFA) Forum (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and the World Bank) have initiated the most ambitious assessment exercise ever undertaken in basic education: the Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment. Over 160 participating countries around the world, including forty-nine countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, are assessing their progress made since 1990 with regard to the provision of education for all as put forth by the forum. A major event for the EFA 2000 assessment exercise in Africa was the conference of all Sub-Saharan countries that took place December 5-10, 1999. In preparation for this conference, the Consultative Group initiated the project, "In Search of Early Childhood Care and Development Indicators: A Contribution to the EFA Year 2000 Assessment." Namibia was suggested as one of five countries to participate in this project; the other four countries were the Philippines, Nepal, Colombia, and Bolivia.

Various documents were collected from both individuals and institutions, including the Ministries of Health and Social Services, the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, and the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing. Because of the decentralization exercise underway in Namibia in which a number of responsibilities have been transferred to the various regions and districts, some of the information needed for the exercise was difficult to obtain. Heavy reliance was therefore placed on obtaining most of the data from the Headquarters of each Ministry. Interviews were also conducted with a number of individuals, including headquarters staff in various ministries, and with the owners of preschools. In addition, physical visits were made by two of our colleagues to preschool centres, mainly in the Khomas region. Information was also collected through correspondence. After collection of data, the compilers of the report prepared the first draft report during organised writing sessions. These reports were shared with the Consultative Group, as well as with members of the ECD Country Committees.

After feedback had been received from various groups, including the Consultative Group, a workshop was organised for the ECD country group to further critique the indicators and make suggestions for the way forward. Before a final report was prepared, a few more visits were made and additional information was collected.

In the following pages we provide some background information on Namibia before presenting details on the application of the indicators, followed by comments and recommendations for the way forward.

Namibia

Namibia is a vast, predominantly arid country in southern Africa with a small population of 1.7 million, mostly concentrated in the wetter far north. After initial colonisation by the Germans in

the late nineteenth century, the country was then run effectively as a province of South Africa for over seventy years. It thus suffered from a doubly oppressive regime-colonial and apartheid. After a long and bitter liberation struggle, the country gained its independence in 1990, with the governing party being SWAPO, the former liberation movement. Today independent Namibia is a unitary secular republic with an executive presidency, a bicameral legislature, an independent judiciary, and a constitution which guarantees the rule of law and the fundamental rights and freedoms of individual citizens.

With an estimated population of only 1.66 million (1997) Namibia is one of the thinly populated countries in Africa, and it is also the most arid country south of the Sahara. Vast tracts of land have a density of less than one person per square kilometre. It is only in sections of the north that one finds a population density of more than five persons per square kilometre. About 70% of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood, yet agriculture contributes only 10% of total value to the GDP.

Poverty is a significant problem in Namibia today, as it was at the time of independence in 1990, but now it is complicated by other social changes. Some studies indicate that many children live in single parent homes. Many confront alcohol and drug abuse, child abuse, domestic conflict, and, in towns, street violence. There are several manifestations of poverty, including infant and young child mortality, reduced life expectancy, child malnutrition, and low birth weight of infants. These conditions represent risk factors that are often precursors for poor outcomes such as school failure/drop out and delinquent behaviour.

The geographical and cultural diversity of Namibia makes the process of trying to arrive at uniform indicators quite complicated, and it makes the task of agreeing on indicators for psychosocial development especially difficult. In addition, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS anticipates the need for the development of an indicator to, for example, mobilise social and political support as well as inform policy.

In contrast to these barriers, the size of the population, the economic level of the country, and the presence of a National ECD Policy, should all make it somewhat easier to work on indicators in Namibia as contrasted with other Sub-Saharan countries that do not share these characteristics.

We will now look at how the indicators were applied and what was found to be true for Namibia in respect to the indicators.

Application of Indicators to Available Data in Namibia

A set of indicators was submitted to the National Committee for a critique. After the first meeting of the ECD National Committee, the compilers of the report collected some information which resulted in an initial draft which was distributed to stakeholders. This was followed by a request for the stakeholders to attend a one-day workshop to further review the proposed indicators. The letter of invitation to the workshop specifically requested that the participants "critique the indicator in terms of whether or not you think it is appropriate and relevant for Namibian ECD. Then determine, if you think it is *appropriate* and *relevant*, whether we already, in your *view* and knowledge, have the information (and statistics) to apply the indicator in our situation. If there is no information, indicate what information needs to be collected and who (individual/or institution) should collect that information. If you think a particular indicator is not

suitable for our context, provide your reason(s) for so indicating. And perhaps you could go a bit further by indicating what needs to be done to make the indicator appropriate and applicable to the Namibian context."

The participants' overall observations were that the indicators were applicable to the Namibian context although they felt that under the present state of affairs it was extremely difficult to collect the required information or to be able to disaggregate existing data to conform to the suggested guidelines. It was pointed out that what was needed was a major survey of ECD programmes, with the collection and analysis of information as per the guidelines. The indicators were applied to available data in Namibia and we provide highlighted findings for each indicator.

Effort (Access/coverage/use)

Indicator 1: Actual enrolment: Gross enrolment as a percentage of relevant age group

There exist statistics for children age 0-6, but what is needed is the collection of data disaggregated by age, e.g., 0-1; 1-2; 2-3, etc. There are both formal ECD centres and non-formal ECD centres, as well as non-formal, home-based care programmes, thus making the concept of "enrolment" difficult to interpret. However, in 1999 there were 34,759 children (0-6) in ECD programmes of a total population of that age of 426,645, giving a percentage of 8% of children enroled. This contrasts with a figure of 1.7% of children aged 0-6 in 1991.

Access. Although the Constitution of Namibia guarantees education for all, the idea of "access" does not seem to be reflected in the national ECD policy of 1996.

Use. The monitoring system is not yet fully in place to establish the degree of use.

Indicator 2: Parental education

It is difficult to calculate this figure due to the unavailability of enrolment figures of parents on ECCD programmes. There is a need to consider, in addition to parental education, "parental involvement and skills to meet the developmental needs of children" as an indicator in Namibia.

Indicator 3: Past enrolment-Percentage of new entrants in the first year of primary with previous ECD

Everyone agreed upon the assumption that children who attend some form of ECD programme will be better prepared for school. In Namibia, two school censuses are conducted each year: the fifteenth school-day Census, held on the first Tuesday in February of the new year, and the Annual Education Census (AEC), held on the first Tuesday in August each year. The fifteenth school-day Census is intended to provide information for operational and planning purposes for the rest of the year, while the AEC provides information to monitor the state of education from year to year (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture 1998).

The fifteenth day school statistics report/form could be modified to include the number of first graders with ECD experience enroled in a particular school. Such a record could then be used to evaluate the impact of preschool on child adaptation to and performance in the first grade. It would be possible to administer a school readiness test to some children at randomly sampled

schools that enrol children with prior ECD experience to find out its effects. Both children with ECD experience and those without such exposure can be tested to determine its impact. This could be done after the fifteenth school-day census when records of those schools enroling students with formal ECD experience are available, which they are not currently.

Quality

It is important that the quantitative data should be accompanied by indicators of quality if we are to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. There is a need in Namibia to calculate indicators of a quality preschool programme and to collect data based on those criteria. Such data is presently not available. Tools to collect such data could include observation/observation checklists and interviews.

Indicator 4: Number of children per teacher/caregiver

There is a need to disaggregate by age the children who are being attended to and the type of programme that provides the care. Currently available statistics lump all children together, irrespective of their age. That is one weakness of the current data. Another difficulty is found in the calculation of teacher: child ratio. The figures available include only the number of caregivers trained during 1999, not the total number of caregivers per region. There is an urgent need to register all ECD centres, including caregivers (trained and assistants); the number of children per centre, including their age and sex; and information on parents and parental contributions. In this present project the indicator cannot be calculated for the reasons cited above.

Indicator 5: Teacher qualification

The basic qualifications required for an ECD caregiver outlined in the Guidelines for Establishing Early Childhood Development Centres in Namibia (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture 1998, 11) are as follows:

- They should have at least a sixth grade education.
- They should have a minimum of six weeks training in early childhood development before they start working with children. They should also receive continuous refresher courses.
- They must have training in first aid.
- They should not use drugs.
- They should not consume alcohol during working hours.
- They should not abuse children, verbally, emotionally, sexually, and physically.
- They should be sensitive to and respect children's social and cultural values and their differences.
- They should be positive and joyful individuals who take a keen interest and pleasure in working with children and in assisting them to develop their full potential.

Currently teacher training at this level is overlooked. No Ministry is given the task of employing teachers at this level; hence teacher training at this level would not guarantee employment and all advantages that go with it.

It was not possible to calculate the percentage of teachers (caregivers) who are qualified over the total number of unqualified teachers (caregivers) due to unavailability of that information.

Indicator 6: Quality of Physical environment

Namibia has developed both physical requirements and safety requirements for the establishment of an Early Childhood Development Centre, which include regulations on such things as space, shade, fencing, and water, as well as on safety requirements. A small survey conducted in the environs of the city of Windhoek (the capital) indicated that the ECD centres visited seemed to fulfil the physical environment guidelines. It was however noted that these centres were located in the high cost areas and therefore could not be considered an indication of the physical environments found in peri-urban and slum areas of the city, as well as those found in the more rural parts of the country and among remote-area dwellers.

Indicator 7: Curriculum or interaction

The curriculum is being worked on by The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). Such a curriculum would ensure that the various centres have a basic or common interaction aspect on which to base the activities. The first draft of this curriculum was ready at the time of the meeting, but the compilers were not able to obtain a copy. The curriculum will be subject to review and approval by all stakeholders, including the NECDC.

It would be useful to observe the curriculum in action and *interview* key persons involved in implementing/evaluating the curriculum, including caregivers and children.

Political Will: Policy and Financing

Indicator 8: Presence of a national ECD policy

Namibia possesses both a National Early Childhood Policy and a Guideline for Establishing Early Childhood Development Centres. These imply political goodwill on the part of the government to the cause of the child.

Both the policy and guidelines need to be reviewed to assess the situation on the ground against the stipulated guidelines to see if the programmes meet the prescribed requirements. There is also a need to find out if the Policy and the Plan are being implemented by all stakeholders; the monitoring and evaluation phase should be similarly implemented.

Indicator 9: Percentage of educationbudget or expenditure for ECD

The 1999/2000 budget allocation is the first of its kind for ECD in Namibia since independence. This tallies well with the political will and commitment on the part of the government.

The total budget assigned to the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing during 1999/2000 budget year is N$221 million; the portion allocated to ECD is 3.6 million N$, mainly intended for infrastructure establishment.

Indicator 10: Costs or expenditure per child

For the purpose of the present budget, emphasis was put on the improvement of physical environments. It will therefore be somewhat unreasonable to compute expenditure per child based on an amount that is specifically assigned for improvement of physical environment. The indicator can be calculated with ease in the future when the funds are directed as such.

Indicator 11: Costs (or average expenditure) by government per child on ECD programmes as a percentage of Gross National Product per Inhabitant

Two constraints were experienced in trying to calculate this indicator at present: (1) the result of indicator ten above is not available; (2) the percentage of Gross National Product per Inhabitant for 1999 will not become available after the assignment has been completed.

Indicator 12: Average expenditure per child by family on ECD for children under six as a percentage of minimum salary (or of family income)

This indicator is difficult to compute in the Namibian context. All surveys conducted to date do not include a figure which reflects expenditure per child by family. The workshop recommended that a future household survey could incorporate this item.

Indicator 13: Child Development

Although participants at the meeting agreed that this was an appropriate indicator for Namibia, they also readily accepted the fact that they did not believe that there exists in Namibia the tests it would take to establish an indicator of child development. Predictably there was acrimonious debate as to what instruments would be used, since the ones known to date were developed and normed elsewhere, and efforts have not been made adapt them to the Namibian context. It was agreed that the formulation of an indicator of child development, important though it was, was something that needed further discussion and consensus-both on how to go about developing it and to determine what instruments might be adopted/adapted for that purpose.

Indicator 14: School Readiness Programme

School readiness is a broad term which includes physical readiness, and emotional and social maturity.

At the age of six a child usually reaches the stage of school maturity. This means that the biological growing process of the child has reached the point where he/she is physically and mentally ready for formal instruction. This does not, however, necessarily mean that the child is emotionally ready for the demands of formal instruction. In other words, the child may not yet be fully mature in terms of school readiness.

The criteria for school readiness are:

- The child should have a *positive self-image* and be eager to attend school.
- The child should be able to sit still and concentrate for about ten minutes.
- The child should not experience any difficulty playing in a group with other children. He should also readily accept the authority of the teacher.
- The child must be able to walk, run, jump, hop, skip, climb, and reach with ease, i.e., the *gross motor skills* must be developed.
- The child should be able to tie his own shoe laces, get dressed/undressed unaided, handle crayons or a paint brush and cut with a small pair of scissors, i.e , *the fine motor* muscles are developed.
- The child should be able to roll, catch, throw or kick a ball, so that his *eye-hand coordination* and *eye-foot coordination* are developed.
- The child should be able to identify and name the main parts of the body.

When the programme was first introduced the first round of grade one teachers were given an in-service training by various facilitators, including consultants who prepared the school readiness programme. Since that time, grade one teachers who are new to the programme are given hands-on experience by fellow teachers in their school who themselves initially underwent in-service training. This arrangement has been identified as a weak point of the programme which needs some attention. In addition, the content of the programme needs to be reviewed to establish its veracity. Pertinent to this is the need to evaluate the programme, with resultant recommendations for improvement.

Indicator 15: Nutritional Status

It is worth mentioning that, although food security plays an important role in the government policy plan, very few studies on comprehensive food and nutrition surveys have been conducted. However, it is common knowledge that a large proportion of the population has problems related to poverty and consequent under-nutrition, while a small proportion has problems with the over consumption of food.

The disparities in the system are visible in the morbidity and mortality rates, in the rate of infection among children and adults, and in the growth of children. Many of the diseases of children are linked to under-nutrition and/or malnutrition.

Indicator 16: Health status of Namibia

It was found that many of the children under five years were treated for nutrition-related diseases. The government therefore needs to pay more attention to the parent's (especially the mother's) knowledge of proper nutrition on the one hand, and to the alleviation of poverty of low- or no-income families on the other. As it is in many African countries, a fair number of Namibian working parents still leave their infants in the care of grandmothers in rural areas who do not have the time or the means to ensure a balanced diet for them. As a result, the child's development is delayed in one or other way. It is common knowledge that children who are malnourished are at risk of acquiring disabilities and that malnutrition can impair brain development in young children.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia at independence identified the following priority sectors: Education, Health, Housing, and Agriculture-health being one of the prioritised areas. The Ministry of Health and Social Services has dedicated all of its efforts to assure good health for all Namibians by the year 2000 and beyond. The Ministry has put into place various health programmes and health facilities and has committed itself to the equitable distribution of resources and to the accessibility of basic services for all.

In 1992, the Ministry of Health and Social Services adopted a Primary Health Care Policy with emphasis on the following components:

- Promotion of proper nutrition, safe water supply, and basic sanitation
- Education and training on community health problems
- Immunisation against the major infectious diseases: polio, diphtheria, tuberculosis, measles, tetanus, and whooping cough
- Maternal and child health care

This could be regarded as a demonstration of political goodwill from the side of the government. With specific reference to early childhood, the Guidelines for Establishing Early Childhood Development Centres in Namibia have included specific health requirements for such centres, including regular visits by mobile health clinics and up-to-date immunisations as a condition for enrolment, etc.

Additional indicators related to health were developed and include:

- Availability of health facilities and services
- Availability of health programmes for children
- Use of The Baby and Mother-Friendly Initiatives
- Infant morbidity and mortality rates
- Maternal morbidity and mortality rates
- Prevalence/Impact of HIV/AIDS
- Immunisation Rates
- Access to safe water and sanitation

Recommendations

The Namibian country case study begins to describe the situation of children and of ECCD programmes in Namibia. As much data is still not yet available on indicators related to ECCD, there is a need to take advantage of the Namibian Census preparation for 2001 to include items that might elicit the necessary information to facilitate the development of relevant indicators. Another suggested method of obtaining data is for Namibia to develop a longitudinal Birth Cohort Study measuring, for example, the impact of social change on various aspects of children's growth and development. Some information relevant to ECCD has been generated from preliminary research studies conducted in Namibia, including Child-to-Child approaches; early childhood education and development; HIV/AIDS; promoting resilience in children; investigations relating to Children's Rights; special needs education; and from studies which ask the question, how much are Namibian children learning in school?

It is concluded that there is much more work to be done in each of these areas, but specifically there is an urgent need to attend to children infected by and affected by HIV/AIDS. For instance, finding out what children actually know about HIV/AIDS, developing indicators to measure prevalence, awareness, attitudes, sexual practices, and misconceptions, as well as exploring the role of children in childrearing after family members (adults, relatives) have been decimated by HIV/AIDS. Sufficient resources also need to be allocated to arrest the disease, through prevention and education, and through behaviour modification.

Future plans for ECCD should also include better parenting programmes, operationalising an ECCD trust fund and developing public awareness campaigns to raise the status of fatherhood. In addition, assessing and improving ECCD quality by, for example, implementing a National Qualifications Authority. Paying more attention to learner-centred education may eliminate (or minimise) dropout from ECD Centres. There also continues to be a need to strengthen community participation as well as partnership, networking, and collaboration in ECCD.

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1 This is a summary of the report by the same title compiled by I. Iithete, C. Haihambo-Muetudhana, J. Hengari, and B. Otaala. For a copy of the full report contact: Barnabas Otaala, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Telephone: 264-61-206-3313; Fax: 264-61-206-3320; Email: botaala@unam.na

Summary of the ECCD Indicators Case Study: Nepal

KISHOR SHRESTHA, PH.D.

Assessing the Supportiveness of the Environment for Young Children

A country case study of Nepal, *In Search of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Indicators: A Contribution to the EFA Year 2000 Assessment*, has been conducted as part of the international study being coordinated by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development. The expansion of early childhood care and development programmes has been a recent phenomenon within the field of ECCD, and a large number of ECCD programmes have been experimented with in Nepal. While some have terminated, others are expanding. In recent years, the development of children during their early years has been a concern for the government, NGOs, and INGOs. Local government bodies, communities, families, and individuals have started taking initiatives toward implementing child care and development programmes. As a result of this, a growing number of children are receiving health, nutrition, and early stimulation services. However, the quality of the services delivered and the need for quantitative expansion of the services are the two major challenges the country is facing. The basic health, nutrition, and early stimulation services have not yet reached a large number of children, especially those living in rural and disadvantaged communities. Because there is a lack of integrated approaches to child development, even those children who receive some kind of care and development services are not the beneficiaries of environments which are intellectually stimulating or emotionally supportive.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to assess the progress achieved in the field of early childhood care and development in Nepal, to complement the information about ECCD that has been collected as part of the regular *Education for All (EFA) Assessment* in Nepal, and to establish a system of assessing and monitoring ECCD for improving programmes and policies in the future.

Specifically, the study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

- To review the existing system of data collection and available tools relevant to ECCD indicators;
- To identify a set of indicators for assessing different dimensions of ECCD in the Nepalese context;
- To develop data collection mechanisms for obtaining information on ECCD programmes run by different organisations; and
- To collect information on selected indicators from the sample districts covering as many programmes as possible.

Child Rights-based and Multi-level Framework

The various indicators that have been developed are based on the concept that the development of children largely depends on the services provided by their families, the political will of the local government, and the resources available in the community in which they live. The rights of the child are inseparably linked with the principles of early childhood care and development: ECCD objectives cannot be achieved without ensuring the rights of the child; the rights of the child cannot be ensured without ECCD services. Therefore, the rights of the child were also considered during the selection of the indicators. Early childhood development programmes are viewed as key components in the overall development of children. It is assumed that children's rights will be met when the environments around the child support their overall development.

The development of children is largely determined by the obligations that the adults (whether they are family members, parent educators, child development centre facilitators, district staff, NGOs, or government policy makers) fulfil. It is assumed that unless things are effectively working at different levels, the desired achievements at the level of the child will not be significantly visible. Keeping these concepts in mind, this study used a child rights-based and multi-level framework.

The indicators selected for this study are related to three core areas:

- Political will covers the prevalence of ECCD-related policies, levels of support (budget and expenditure), and inclusion of children's issues in agenda for discussion.
- Socio-economic condition is concerned with the national basic indicators connected with a variety of other indicators relating to people's well being-income level, health, education and gender information.
- Interactions are another important set of indicators that encompass the interactions of the children with the people around them, interactions that are critical to their development. At the district and national level, the key interaction indicators are seen as appropriate training and ongoing back-up support and supervision for ECD personnel.

Methodology

Working within this framework, the study used the following approaches and strategies to achieve its objectives:

- Formation of a Taskforce

At the beginning of the study, a taskforce consisting of people representing various ministries, NGOs, and INGOs was formed to secure support of various experts involved in ECCD in Nepal. The taskforce provided valuable suggestions at various times throughout the study period.

- Organisation of a National Workshop

A one-day national workshop was organised to review the set of ECCD indicators suggested by the International Consultative Group and to identify a set of indicators for assessing different dimensions of ECCD in the Nepalese context. Thirty-one people working in the field of ECCD and representing governmental organisations, NGOs, and INGOs working in and outside the

Kathmandu Valley, participated in the workshop. At the end of the workshop a set of indicators for assessing ECCD in Nepal had been developed.

- Use of Secondary Data

For collecting necessary data and information the study used both the secondary and primary data sources. The secondary data sources such as research reports, national plans and policies, official documents, and articles were extensively reviewed to find out the status of ECCD at the national level. Similarly, official documents, records, registers, and meeting minutes were reviewed to collect district and village level information.

- Collection of Primary Data

For the purpose of collecting primary data, a team of researchers visited three districts, one each from the Eastern, Central, and Mid-Western Development Regions. One of the districts selected from the Eastern Development Region was hilly; the other two were Terai. These districts have some form of existing ECCD programmes launched by the government, NGOs, or INGOs. However, in Nepal there are districts where there are no ECCD programmes available. In each selected district, a VDC was chosen for information relevant to ECCD at the village level. In each village, three communities or locations where ECCD programmes were being run were selected for collecting information relevant to ECCD activities.

Similarly, two focus group discussions (FGDs), one that included the parents whose children were enroled in ECCD centres and another with the parents of children who were not enroled, were conducted to find out the status of ECCD at the family level.

For collecting information relevant to child level indicators in each ECCD centre being studied, two children from each of the three-, four-, and five-year-old age groups were randomly selected to represent their age group. Survey forms, checklists, and interview guidelines were used for collecting necessary primary data.

- Review of the Existing System of Data Collection and Monitoring Tools

A review of the existing system of data collection and monitoring tools used in ECCD programmes by GOs, NGOs, and INGOs working in the field of ECCD was carried out. This review provided an insight into the present situation of monitoring and assessment of ECCD programmes in the country. The review shows that there are different types of tools used by different organisations (GOs, NGOs and INGOs) that are designed according to programme need; hence, there is no uniformity between the tool types. Through the use of monitoring tools, the ECCD implementing organisations have tried to find out the situation of their respective programmes in terms of quantitative and qualitative achievements. The monitoring tools used included survey forms, school record forms, monthly progress record forms, monitoring checklists, forms for assessing various developmental aspects of children, and statistics forms. Some of the organisations have also tried to assess the impact of the programme on primary school education by developing forms that collect information on the number of graduates from the centre and the number of enrolees to primary schools. The forms were usually used by the frontline workers-especially the facilitators and the supervisors.

- Selection of a Set of Indicators and Development of Tools

For the purpose of selecting ECCD indicators for Nepal, the indicators suggested by the Consultative Group and the existing system of data collection and monitoring tools used by different organisations in Nepal were reviewed. Based on the suggestions made in the national workshop, a set of indicators and corresponding data collection tools have been developed and used for this study. As discussed earlier, the status of ECCD is measured at the national, district, village, family, and child levels. The status of ECCD in Nepal is presented in accordance with the list of indicators selected for each of these levels.

■ List of Indicators and Status of ECCD in Nepal

The list of indicators selected and used for assessing ECCD in Nepal included both quantitative and qualitative parameters. It is assumed that some of the efforts and achievements made in the field of childcare and development can be better interpreted qualitatively rather than in statistical terms. Therefore, besides collecting the quantifiable indicators, a set of additional qualitative information has been collected and used for assessing the status of ECCD in Nepal at various levels.

ECCD Indicators at National level

The two indicators-1) gross enrolment ratio in ECCD programmes, and 2) percentages of new entrants to Grade One who have attended some form of organised ECCD programme-that are included in EFA assessment have been taken from the study conducted by the EFA Assessment Committee and the Ministry of Education. The data presented are based on the information collected from 4168 pre-primary schools spread in twenty-three out of seventy-five districts of the country.

1. Gross enrolment ratio of children aged three to five years in ECCD programmes

The study conducted by EFA Assessment Committee, Ministry of Education has found that the gross enrolment ratio of ECCD is 8.07%.

2. Percentage of new entrants to Grade One who have attended some form of organised ECCD programme

The EFA Assessment Committee and the Ministry of Education has found that the percentage of new entrants to Grade One with organised ECCD exposure is 13.5%.

Based on the data of the three districts collected during fieldwork for this study, the values of several indicators (No. 3 to 7) have been determined as follows:

3. Child-caregiver ratio *26:1*

4. Qualified caregivers (percentage of caregivers with school leaving certificate qualification) *49.5%*

5. Trained caregivers' percentage *56.3%*

6. Native/local caregivers' percentage *69.8%*

7. Percentage of children who are weighed 35.6%

Note: Districts selected for the study were not based on random sample. Hence extra caution is required while interpreting these as national figures.

8. Percentage of Children Who Have Been Weighed

Based on the data of the three districts collected during fieldwork for this study, the percentage of children below three years of age, who have been weighed is 35.6.

9. Increase in Health Status

Some of the indicators show an increase in the health status over a period of six years, from 1990 to 1996. The Infant Mortality Rate has been reduced to 79/1000 from 107/1000. The Under-five Mortality rate has been reduced to 118/1000 from 165/1000. Access to safe drinking water has been increased from 37% to 53%, and access to sanitary means of excreta disposal has been increased from 6% in 1990 to 18% in 1996.

Additional Qualitative Information at National Level

10. Development of ECCD Plans and Policies (setting targets)

In 1990-2000 national plans and policies for early childhood care and development have been developed in Nepal. They can be found in the seventh, eighth, and ninth Five-Year Plans, the Ten-Year National Programme of Action (POA) for Children and Development (1992), in the Education for All (EFA) Plan of Action (1992-2000), and the Basic and Primary Education Master Plan (1997-2002). The plans and policies developed so far have stressed the following: adopting a community-based approach; mobilising non-governmental and social organisations and local government for implementing ECCD programmes; launching parental education and low-cost pre-primary education programmes; setting targets for establishing ECCD centres; and ensuring coordination among the relevant organisations and programmes for child development.

11. Development of Human Resources for Implementing ECCD Programmes

The programme implementing organisations, the university faculty and research centre, and non-governmental organisations are organizing training programmes to develop human resources required at various levels for implementing ECCD programmes.

12. Development of Curriculum and Materials

During the 1990s, various organisations have developed materials that include ECCD curricula for different models of ECCD programmes, resource manuals for ECCD workers, children's books, teacher training and parental education packages, ECCD programme operational guidelines, and other printed materials to be used for implementing ECCD programmes.

13. Involvement of Government Organisation in ECCD Activities (BPEP and Local Government)

The Department of Education of the Ministry of Education is implementing community-based early childhood development programmes in forty-one districts. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Children, and Women has been formed to undertake child development activities. Decentralized Planning for the Child Programme is being run in seven districts. Orientation programmes for the District Development Committee (DDC) Chairmen, Local Development Officers (LDOs), and representatives of concerned ministries have been organised, and District Child Development Committees are also being formed.

Through the enactment of the Decentralization Act of 1999, the government has given local governments (the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Municipalities) the right to establish ECCD centres using their own resources and have granted them permission to establish, implement, and organise ECCD centres.

14. Conceptual Clarity (Shift from Educational Programme to Holistic Development)

At the conceptual level emphasis is being placed on the holistic development of children, instead of on rote learning, i.e., teaching the three R's (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic). This concept is reflected in the national plans and policies.

ECCD Indicators at District Level

In identifying ECCD indicators at the district level, three districts were selected for the primary data collection. The districts selected for the field study represent plain (*Terai*) and hilly regions, and the Eastern, Central and Mid-Western Development Regions. The District Administration Office, District Development Committee, District Education Office, District Health Office, and District Child Welfare Committee were consulted for necessary information. The ECCD status of the districts is presented below.

1. Gross Enrolment Rate

The gross enrolment rate of children aged three to five in ECCD programmes varies from 11.40 to 22.06.

2. Number of Children per ECCD Centre

The number of children per centre by district varies from nineteen to thirty-one. The number is lower in the private sector.

3. Number of Caregivers per ECCD Centre

There is one caregiver per ECCD centre.

4. Child-Caregiver Ratio in ECCD Centre

As there is one caregiver per ECCD centre, the child-caregiver ratio is the same as the ratio of the number of children per centre (i.e., it varies from nineteen to thirty-one with an average of twenty-six).

5. Proportion of Children Whose Parents Received Parental Education

In Nepal, the duration of parental education (PE) programmes ranges from a few hours to three months. Only the programmes with duration of at least three days or twenty hours are included in this study. The proportion of parents (of children up to five years of age) having received PE is only nominal (1.14%) in the *Terai* district of Mid-Western Development Region and slightly higher (about 19%) in the hilly district of the Eastern Region where concerted programmes are being launched.

6. Proportion of ECCD expenditure in DDC budget

The District Development Committee (DDC), the main political body at the district level, allocates the budget for various developmental activities within the district. The budget allocated for ECD/pre-primary education, child health, and child welfare programmes are included in the budget for ECCD. The proportion of the District Development Committee budget spent on ECCD-related activities is only nominal-about 2 % in the *Terai* district of the Mid-Western Region, and 0.07 % in the hilly district of the Eastern Region.

7. Percentage of Teachers and Facilitators by Qualification

Successful completion of the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination is a basic academic qualification for primary school teachers in Nepal. Considering this qualification as basic for teachers/facilitators of ECCD centres, the proportion of qualified ECCD personnel is computed. The percentage of teachers having SLC certificate varies from 27.8% in the hilly district of the Eastern Region to 66.7% in the Terai district of the Mid-Western Region. In total, the percentage of teachers with SLC qualification is 49.6%.

8. Percentage of Trained Teachers/Facilitators

Successful completion of at least seven days' training is considered as basic for teachers/facilitators in ECCD centres. A wide range (28% to 72%) of trained teachers/facilitators in ECCD centres of the sample districts have been observed. In total, the percentage of trained teachers is 54.7%.

9. Percentage of Grade 1 Children with ECCD Experience

The data on this indicator could be obtained from only one district. In this district, which represents *Terai* district of the Central Region, about 29% of students of Grade One had exposure to the ECCD programme.

10. Immunisation Rate

In Nepal, major immunisations take place on completion of the first year of life. Four main types of immunisation have been identified: BCG, three doses of DPT, polio, and measles. Immunisation rates are more than 84%, except in the hilly district of the Eastern Region where they are 66.9%.

11. Percentage of Children who have been Weighed

District-level health agencies conduct growth monitoring of children below three years of age. Health posts and related agencies maintain the growth records. However, it was found that the growth monitoring was limited to the weighing of children. Thirty-one-and-a-half percent of children below three years of age have been weighed in the district of the Central Region and 39.4% in the district of the Mid-Western Region.

12. Number of Children per Health Worker

The ratio of children per health worker is 228:1 in the *Terai* district of the Central Region, 249:1 in the hilly district of the Eastern Region, and 840:1 in the *Terai* district of the Mid-Western Region.

Additional Qualitative Information on ECCD at District Level

13. Presence of ECCD Plans and Policies at District Level

It was found that the DDC and other district level offices have formulated plans and policies regarding ECCD. The District Child Welfare Committees have developed district child welfare and development plans and the District Education Offices have developed district education plans. The plans and policies developed have stressed the establishment of new ECCD centres and have set targets for establishing more ECCD centres over the next five years. They also include provisions to support orphans and disabled children, to establish children's homes and community-based child development centres, and to run parenting education and child health programmes.

14. Concerns about Children

Meeting minutes of DDC, DEO, DHO, DCDC, Nepal Children's organisation district office, and NGOs, were reviewed to find out the concerns about children.

It is found that in the district of the Central Region a meeting is held once in every month to discuss the progress of the ECD programmes run under Basic and Primary Education Programme. In the hilly district of the Eastern Region the issues of the development of women and children have been discussed in DDC meetings. Coordination, follow-up, and supervision of the NGOs and INGOs working for child development in the district have been a major concern of the District Child Welfare Committee of the district in the Mid-Western Region.

ECCD Indicators at VDC Level

A Village Development Committee (VDC) in each of the three sample districts was included in the study. VDCs were selected based on the greater prevalence of ECCD programmes. The ECCD status of the VDCs is presented below.

1. Gross Enrolment Rate

The gross enrolment rate of children of age three to five in ECCD programmes varies from 22.42 to 58.43.

2. Number of Children per ECCD Centre

The number of children per centre by VDC varies from as low as sixteen to as high as forty-six. The number is lower in the hilly VDC and higher in the *Terai* VDC's.

3. Number of Caregivers per ECCD Centre

There is one caregiver per ECCD centre, except in private schools of the Terai VDC of the Mid-Western Region.

4. Child-Caregiver Ratio in ECCD Centre

The child-caregiver ratio varies from sixteen to forty. The ratio is low in the hilly VDC and high in the *Terai* VDC of the Mid-Western Region.

5. Percentage of Children Whose Parents Received Parental Education

The percentage of parents (of children of age up to five years) who have received PE varies from 54.59% to 17.10%. The percentage is low in the *Terai* VDC of the Mid-Western Region and high in the hilly VDC.

6. Percentage of ECCD expenditure in VDC budget

The percentage of VDC budget spent on ECCD-related activities is 6.73% in the hilly VDC and 11.42% in the *Terai* VDC of the Mid-Western Region.

7. Percentage of Teachers and Facilitators by Qualification

The percentage of teachers/facilitators having SLC degree varies from 44.4% in the hilly VDC, 66.7% in the *Terai* VDC of the Mid-Western Region and 100.0% in the *Terai* VDC of the Central Region.

8. Percentage of Trained Teachers/Facilitators

The percentage of trained teachers/facilitators in ECCD centres is 42.9% in the *Terai* VDC of the Mid-Western Region and 66.7% in the hilly VDC of the Eastern Region.

9. Percentage of Grade One Children with ECCD Experience

The percentage of students of Grade One who had exposure to the ECCD programme is 19.3% in the Terai VDC of the Mid-Western Region and 66.7% in the *Terai* VDC of the Central Region.

10. Immunisation Rate

Immunisation rates (for all the four immunisations) are about 50% in the VDC of the Central Region. Immunisation rates for BCG are 100.0% in the other two VDCs. Immunisation rates for the other diseases are more than 66% (except 36.7% for measles) in the hilly VDC.

11. Percentage of Children who have been Weighed

The data on this indicator could be obtained from only one VDC. In this VDC, which represents *Terai* VDC of the Mid-western Region, 44.1% of children below three years have been weighed.

12. Ratio of Children per Health Worker

The numbers of children per health worker are 305 in the hilly VDC, 877 in the Terai VDC of the Mid-Western Region, and 892 in the *Terai* VDC of the Central Region.

13. Availability of Physical Facilities at ECCD Centres

Adequate indoor spaces are found available in only 40% of centres. Adequate outdoor spaces are available in 80% of centres Adequate ventilation and lighting facilities are available in 70% of centres. Only 20% of centres are found adequately cleaned. Drinking water facilities are adequately available in only 60% of centres. Only 60% of centres have some kind of toilet facilities. The toilets available are not child friendly.

14. Presence of ECCD Plans and Policies at VDC level

It was found that the VDCs have formulated plans and policies regarding education, although they do not specify to which levels of education. The plans and policies developed have stressed providing scholarship to the underprivileged children, and supervising and monitoring the programmes being run by NGOs and INGOs. The VDC in the hilly district has developed a policy of running parental education programmes in the localities where ECCD programmes are being run.

15. Concerns about Children

Meeting minutes of the VDCs were reviewed to determine the concerns about children. It was found that the VDCs discussed children's health, the need for providing vaccinations and distribution of Vitamin 'A' capsules, and provision of financial assistance to the local people for organising awareness campaigns on vaccination and vitamin 'A' distribution programmes.

ECCD Indicators at Family Level

The focus group discussions were organised to collect information on family-level indicators. The status of children in the family is presented below:

- Family Expenditure on Children

The parents whose children are in privately run schools are spending about 18 to 35% of the family income for children in ECCD-related activities. The parents whose children are in public ECCD programmes are spending only about 9 to 15% of the family income for children in ECCD related activities.

- Family's Concern for Young Children

The families included in the study in all the districts have a shortage of food. The families in the plains (*Terai*) have sufficient drinking water supply, but the families in the hilly district lack sufficient drinking water. The families are concerned about the health of children. However, discrimination in favour of boys is made if a child needs special treatment that involves high costs.

- Learning Opportunities at Home

The children below six years of age have opportunities to interact with their parents and adults at home. In most cases, children have more opportunities to interact with their mothers than with their fathers.

The materials available in the immediate environment of the children, such as stones, leaves, mud, wood, sand, and farming equipment are their learning materials. Some parents have also made toys and dolls for their children using locally available raw materials.

- Place of Children in Family Decisions

Children of below six years of age are not involved in decision-making. However, the interests of the children are considered while making decisions. Some of the parents involved children in decision-making when they made decisions that related to the children.

ECCD Indicators at Child Level

An ECCD programme is meant to have a positive effect on children's developmental status. A set of indicators that included physical-motor and psychosocial development of children, their school readiness, and their nutritional status was developed, but it was not possible to administer the indicators due the time constraints of this study. By using the secondary data, and through discussions with the parents, the status of children is derived as follows:

- Developmental Status of Children

The study conducted by the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development in 1998 found that the children who had been exposed to ECCD intervention performed better in cognitive scores as compared to their counterparts of the same age who had not been exposed to ECCD intervention.

- Parent's Views on Developmental Status of Children

According to the parents' views, children gained improvement in all the developmental areas after attending the ECCD centre. As a result of the ECCD exposure, children learned songs, they started to speak fluently and confidently, they became more cooperative with their peers and other people, and they learned good manners and began to respect their elders.

- School Readiness

CERID's study conducted in 1997 found that the children with ECCD background demonstrated the following behaviours in Grade 1:

- children became familiar with the school environment well before joining the formal school;
- children attended school regularly;
- children actively participated in classroom learning and extra-curricular activities;
- children felt at ease with teachers; and
- children were less hesitant and were rarely frightened.

Another study conducted by CERID in 1998 found that in primary schools the retention and promotion rates among the children with ECCD background were significantly better than those among the children without any ECCD background. Similarly, the repetition and dropout rates among the children with ECCD background were significantly lower than their counterparts who had no ECCD background.

Outcomes of the Study

The two major distinctive outcomes of the study are:

1. THE STUDY PRESENTS A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF ECCD STATUS IN NEPAL. Through the use of both primary and secondary data a clear picture of the status of ECCD in Nepal is presented by this study. Adaptation of a child rights-based and multi-level framework have allowed to identify what is happening at different levels in order to have desired achievements on a significant scale at the child level. It documents the entire set of activities and achievements made in the field of ECCD in Nepal.

The study included all the major ECCD programmes conducted by government, non-government and international non-government organisations. It included policy formulations, financial allocations and adults' obligations to young children. It also covered quality of the services provided and impact made on children. The document has been the first of its kind that would be useful for anyone interested in and concerned with the children in Nepal.

2. A SET OF TOOLS AND MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING AND ASSESSING ECCD PROGRAMMES. The tools and data collection mechanisms developed and used for this study have been a rich source for all the organisations implementing ECCD programmes in Nepal. These tools are now available for any interested organisations and individuals.

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Summary of Colombian Study of ECCD Indicators

Final Report is in Spanish

Identificación de Indicadores de Cuidado y Desarrollo de la Niñez Temprana en Colombia. Centro Internacional de Educación y Desarrollo Humano (CINDE). Bogotá, Mayo de 2000.

This document is the result of discussions held on several occasions by the following organisations working in the early childhood field in Colombia: Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco; the Ministry of Health; Pastoral Social de la Infancia; Save the Children; UNICEF; PanAmerican Health Organization; the Ministry of Education; the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF); Corporeducación; the Christian Children's Fund, Compensar; and the World Organization for Preschool Education. In addition, the discussions included representatives from the Social Council attached to the Presidency of the Republic, the National Statistical Department (DANE), and a group from the National University that has taken on responsibility for monitoring the state of children in the country within the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This study is divided into four parts:

- A description of existing ECCD programmes in Colombia. In this section, each organisation describes their involvement, or potential involvement in the ECCD field.
- A description of monitoring and evaluation systems, including indicators presently used by each organisation.
- A critique of sixteen indicators proposed by the Consultative Group as a possible basis for mounting a national monitoring system.
- A proposal for indicators to be applied in monitoring and evaluating early childhood care and development in Colombia.

The study falls short of spelling out how the proposed information would be collected, but it does suggest that a module be added to the ongoing collection of data in national household surveys and to the periodic health and population study carried out in Colombia by Profamilia. In both cases, additional funding and political will would be crucial to incorporate additional questions pertaining to care and development into the existing programmes.

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NETWORK NOTES

ACTIVITIES OF THE CG SECRETARIAT

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

ACTIVITIES OF THE PARTNERS

ECCD RESOURCES

MEETINGS

Activitiesof the CG Secretariat

The Consultative Group's Participation in the Education For All Process

The CG partners within the regions and across agencies have been significantly involved in the EFA process since Jomtien. At that first World Conference on Education for All, the CG consortium lobbied, along with others, to ensure that the fundamental concept, "Learning Begins at Birth," was taken on board and integrated into the overall Jomtien agreement. In Amman, Jordan, the Consultative Group reinforced this message with that of "Eight is Too Late." In preparation for the Dakar Forum (April 26-28, 2000), some of our partners (agency and regional participants) provided inputs into some of the regional meetings that led up to the conference in April, and Robert G. Myers (a member of the Secretariat) undertook on behalf of the CG (funded by UNICEF) a global thematic review of ECCD in the past decade for the Dakar conference (see www.unesco.org/wef, click on "The Lead Up" and do a search for Robert Myers). In addition, the Consultative Group organised a Strategy Session on Early Childhood Development in Dakar highlighting key issues and challenges for the future. The CG also presented a paper at an EFA Follow-up meeting (November 2000) that highlighted future areas of priority and challenges in the area of ECCD, including the improvement and development of appropriate indicators for ECCD within specific countries as well as:

- HIV/AIDS and the impact on children, families, other caregivers;
- Early literacy and family literacy efforts;
- Conflict and post-conflict situations and their impact on young children and families;
- Street children and other children living in difficult circumstances;
- Birth to three-year-olds: their care and development, child rearing practices, early brain development;
- The Children's Rights Convention: issues and follow-up for young children;
- Training and capacity building of ECD practitioners, programmers, researchers, organisations, and policymakers;

- Quality delivery in ECD; and
- Sustainability (of programmes, local ECD organisations).

In order to meet the ECD goal as outlined in The Dakar Framework for Action (Dakar 2000)- Goal # 1, "Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children," CG regional participants and member organisations will continue to look for appropriate opportunities for ongoing participation and active engagement in the proposed follow-up to Dakar. Through this, we aim to ensure continued awareness-raising of ECD and its ability to contribute towards the overall EFA process (e.g., it enhances children's early development, it can increase the efficiency of basic education, it complements and supports other goals, such as increasing girls' education and women's literacy).

The Final Report of the World Education Forum, the Dakar Framework for Action and Outline of UNESCO's Draft Action Plan for Follow-up to the Dakar Forum are available at: www.unesco.org/wef

Consultative Group Survey

Many thanks to our ECCD friends and colleagues who filled out the survey in the last issue of the CN. This has provided us with valuable information on your work in ECCD, feedback on the Coordinators' Notebook and information on what kind of computer/internet technology you are using. One pressing social issue that readers would like to see addressed in a subsequent issue of the Coordinators' Notebook is the impact of HIV/AIDS on young children, their families, and communities. This has been echoed by many of our regional networks and partners. As such, we will devote the next issue of the CN to HIV/AIDS, particularly as it relates to children under six. We look forward to hearing from you, the kinds of work that you are doing in this area including programme strategies and advocacy. For those with internet access, we will have an area on our website to post messages after May 1, 2001. For those without access, submissions by post are welcome! Please note that a copy of the survey will be available on our new website after May 1, 2001.

Consultative Group Website

Consultative Group Website www. ecdgroup.com has a new look! Please visit us after May 1, 2001 to access updated information on ECCD and resources.

News from the International Secretariat

Arab Resource Collective (ARC)

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A new Arab ECD Training Resource: Adults and Children Learning-an holistic and integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Development

During the last ten years, early childhood practitioners, academics, NGO trainers, administrators, and donors in the Arab region have been working together and networking through the Childhood Programmes of the Arab Resource Collective (ARC). This communication has occurred at regional and country levels in order to develop a better understanding of the reality and challenges of promoting more sustainable and culturally appropriate early childhood programmes.

With an awareness and commitment to a child rights approach, the vision is founded on inclusive approaches to improve the lives of all children. It advocates vital partnerships with and support for parents and families with young children, and for the empowerment of ECCD workers in preschool and school-age programmes, through participatory training and networking. The awareness that even young and marginalised children have solid opinions on their life experiences is being explored; this concept is important for the development of quality programmes and policies.

Who is it for?

- Facilitators of training for middle level trainers in ECCD programme development.
- Experienced practitioners with traditional and more formal approaches to training with responsibility for training in their own place of work using active participatory styles for adult learning. This includes NGO Training Resource Centres, NGO Supervisors and Coordinators offering ECCD services, training staff in governmental organisations and Ministries who will train kindergarten and school teachers, community ECCD staff, parents, volunteers, and interdisciplinary groups.

Key areas of content

Part I consists of three Chapters:

- One: the historical context of the collective learning process, which produced a framework of holistic, integrated ECCD principles, and the need for the participatory approach to professional and community development.
- Two: a conceptual framework for holistic development with collective learning processes for both adults and children.
- Three: a practical Guide to use the participatory approach to programme development.

Part II consists of a Working Manual with 27 suggested topics that can be expanded, adapted and lead to newly developed themes.

The presentation of the topics is designed to facilitate classroom group work on key issues with active fieldwork with children, parents, community, other service providers, policymakers,

media and donors. Evidence gathered in the field is then examined back in the classroom and conclusions drawn and action often recommended.

Will it make a difference?

This resource is a modest attempt to address the needs of those working in ECCD, often with rather piecemeal, fragmented training, and with few or traditional formal qualifications. It targets those who are seeking guidance on developing programmes that are more relevant, accessible, and sustainable, not only for the more common services, but for raising the awareness of the rights of all children, so often excluded or segregated due to cultural, social, or economic constraints. It offers opportunities to reflect on current practice and philosophy, to explore new directions actively within the family, community, and institutions, and to take the step forward to be creative in developing alternative initiatives in partnership with adults and with children.

With its focus on creatively facilitating adult and child learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as group decision- making, it should build on and strengthen the already proven abilities of the many women who are the main caregivers and providers of ECCD programmes and services.

ECCD is often a catalyst for community and women's development, as well as for institutional development-from the grass roots level to that of national decision making. It is hoped that moving from principles to good practice will be more effective as the adults living and working with children, and the children themselves, become more aware of the rights-based approach.

The authors, Dr. Jacqueline Sfeir, Dean of the Education Faculty at Bethlehem University, and Julia Gilkes, a former Save the Children and ARC Early Years Adviser, have developed this new training resource, drawing on their firsthand experiences as regular members of the regional ECCD consultative meetings, workshops, and Dialogues organised by the Arab Resource Collective. Both have extensive experience in ECCD in Palestine, and as consultants in other countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco, and in the international ECCD community.

Although this resource has emerged from an Arab perspective and has been field tested in Palestine and Lebanon, the authors are quite clear that it can be used by ECCD organisations in other parts of the world. The English version will be field tested by SCFUK in Central Europe and possibly in S.E. Asia. Ideas from the manual have been promoted in a conference on Community Education in Africa.

ARC will carry out a series of regional and local events in Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen to promote the manual and train on its use, as a major part of its regional programme in 2001-2002.

Latin American Network-Grupo Consultivo/America Latina

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Strengthening ECCD Programmes and Policies in Latin America

During the past year, activities of the LA Network of the CGECCD have included:

- Outreach to institutions and individuals to be part of the LA network.
- Continued development of regional website in Spanish (www.cinde.org) supported by students in CINDE's doctoral programme (see description below).
- Visits to Costa Rica, Bolivia, Venezuela and El Salvador to promote the CGECCD and the organisation and/or consolidation of ECCD networks.

In addition CINDE has:

- provided technical assistance to Costa Rica for the organisation of its programme for children 0-5 and motivated national groups to organise an ECCD network;
- completed a rapid assessment of the programmes for children 0-3 in Venezuela;
- motivated an inter-institutional committee to promote the ECCD network, with the support of UNICEF; and
- started a diplomado en ECCD in El Salvador with the participation of representatives from key institutions working in ECCD.

CINDE has recently been admitted to the Childwatch Network, which is interested in strengthening its activities in Latin America. We are in the process of developing a common agenda for the region, which will include the organisation of a cross-cultural research project and some meetings of the LA institutions that belong to the network.

Toy Libraries

As part of the USAID/UNESCO project , and with cooperation from UNICEF, two pilot toy libraries will be organised in El Salvador in early 2001 using CINDE's experience with parent-child toy libraries and expanding it into community-based toy libraries. CINDE is cooperating in the development of two demonstration toy libraries in Colombia and in the training of personnel who are coordinating toy libraries in different countries, under the sponsorship of CIELO (a French NGO that has an alliance with UNESCO). CINDE is also giving technical assistance in the organisation of a pilot toy library and cooperating with the training of Toy Librarians in a national programme organised by the First Lady in Colombia.

Demand for toy libraries is of interest to UNESCO, as it is currently engaged in a partnership to help develop "early childhood play/learning spaces" within existing toy libraries with CIELO that has helped set up a network of local toy libraries in poor neighbourhoods in seven Latin American cities. Thus, in cooperation with CINDE and Cielo, UNESCO is exploring the possibility of strengthening information exchange between existing national/subregional groups and networks of toy libraries in the region, and is looking into the possibility of linking these various groups together to create a regional network of toy libraries.

Research

Children 0-6

The study of meaningful experiences for children from 0 to 6, with emphasis on programmes for children from 0 to 3 and their families, being conducted under the sponsorship of UNICEF's regional office, will be completed in early 2001. Case studies from six countries are being developed, and lessons learned identified for inclusion on the CINDE website. A general publication is being prepared, with recommendations for different audiences.

Effectiveness Initiative (EI)

CINDE has been very active in working on the EI project, participating in EI workshops and obtaining and analysing information from the PROMESA PROJECT. A publication summarising the twenty years of experience with this project will be published early in 2001. Also, as a complementary activity of the EI, a publication of a longitudinal study of some aspects of PROMESA is in process, under the sponsorship of the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Indicators

CINDE also participated in the EFA indicators of ECCD programmes coordinated by the CG and is participating in a study of identification of indicators of quality of elementary education by the children themselves. This is being done with the support of Save the Children England, UNICEF, and Restrepo Barco Foundation from Colombia.

Doctoral in Social Science with emphasis in Early Childhood and Youth

This new programme (minimum duration is three years) is being offered by CINDE, the International Research Centre on Education and Human Development, in strategic alliance with the University of Manizales as one of the activities of the recently created Centre for Advance Studies of Early Childhood and Youth, and in cooperation with Caldas University, Manizales Autonomous University and FESCO, a foundation specialising in ECCD.

The programme uses a participatory theoretical and practical methodology and includes an international emphasis in the programme.

For questions regarding this programme please contact Marta Arango at: cinde@cartagena.cetcol.net.co or Sara Victoria Alvarado at: cinde@manizales.cetcol.net.co
Please also see: www.cinde.com

Eastern Europe

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Report on the activities in 2000

The first attempt to organise a Central and Eastern European ECCD Network for interested organisations and individuals occurred in 1999. In 2000, new contacts were made and the efforts to develop the network continued with some success.

Past joint activities have included:

1. The development of a proposal to investigate the profound processes of change taking place in childcare and kindergarten provision in Eastern Europe and to develop strategies for managing this transition (currently looking for funders).

2. Presentation at the *Complexity, Diversity and Multiple Perspectives in Early Childhood Services: 10th European Conference on the Quality of Early Childhood Education* in London, August 29- September 1, 2000. The symposium, *Similar or not? Childhood in Some Central and Eastern European Countries*, described what it is like for a child to grow up in the countries represented. Researchers from the emerging Central and Eastern European Early Childhood Care and Development Network talked about some of the most pertinent ECCD issues in their respective countries. In addition to providing a general description of available provisions and services for pre-school-age children and their families, the qualitative aspects of their lives were considered. The aim was to illustrate the changes that are taking place within the different systems of early childhood care and development/education and to attempt to assess the extent to which research and/or experience of other countries impact on proposed changes in policy and delivery of services. The papers from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Armenia and Hungary also addressed the issue of diversification in children's services and the role of the state.

3. Pro Excellentia Foundation organised the 2nd Regional Early Childhood Care and Development Meeting again in Budapest, October 26-28, 2000. The event took place following the first Regional Conference on *Children Deprived of Parental Care: Rights and Realities* organised by UNICEF in Budapest. We benefited from the fact that some of the participants attended both meetings and could report issues of interest to our network members. The ECCD meeting was supported by UNESCO, Save the Children UK, UNICEF, and the Consultative Group. Forty-five people from twenty countries participated, including representatives of the Bernard van Leer Foundation and the Step by Step Network. The agenda covered issues of advocacy in ECCD, UNESCO's early childhood and family education-related activities, topics from UNICEF's regional conference, an update on Education For All early childhood issues, a presentation of the CD-ROM, *Early Childhood Counts*, a field visit to kindergarten for children ages 3-6, a presentation on the work of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and discussions around further developing the network.

As the major topic of the meeting was advocacy for ECCD, the group, led by Maria Andruszkiewicz (Save the Children UK), identified priority change objectives for the region. These were:

- To change thinking and attitudes about younger children from a primarily needs-based approach towards a rights-based one.

- To increase (to build) professional and institutional capacity to offer alternative services for families and communities.
- To guarantee every child access to at least one form of early years care/educational provision.
- Establishment of parents' associations and support for them (e.g., capacity building and parenting education) so that parents are empowered to participate in decisions about service provision for their children.
- Changes in the content of teacher training.
- Extending educational services in rural areas, especially with respect to services that involve parents.
- More sound research in ECCD matters, which would inform training at different levels.
- An increased profile and focus on the 0-3 age group.
- Services based on the principle of inclusion.
- Action on the issue of child abuse.
- Improved information and education directed at families for better parenting.
- To develop and improve tools, standards, methods for quality education, and care and child development.

Since the changes the group felt necessary were large ones, the remaining time was spent analysing some identified problems in order to gain a sense of what factors were preventing the desired changes from happening.

In conclusion, the participants confirmed the decisions of last year's meeting, to:

- Participate in joint research and make efforts to provide/find alternative funding to carry out joint research activity.
- Collaborate on various topics/projects.
- Share information and existing materials.
- Identify focal points at the country level.
- Create an electronic newsletter (2 issues per year).
- Organise regular annual meetings (mid-October) in different venues.
- Identify who is active in ECCD in the network countries.
- Cooperation with other networks and organisations.

Central Asia

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MOCEF Activities for Central Asia-Activities Completed May 1999 to Present

Publication of "8 is Too Late" in Turkish

"8 is too late!" is a series of fact sheets prepared for the EFA Forum with support provided by UNESCO, advocating the importance of ECCD programmes and emphasising the benefits of positive childhood experiences for the greater society. The age for primary school enrolment is 7 in Turkey, and therefore the title has been translated as "7 Çok Geç!" (7 is too Late!) in Turkish. The fact sheets have been published as a booklet and have been distributed to Ministry of Education officials, policymakers, media members, universities, and NGOs. UNESCO provided the funds for the translation and publication of the book.

Central Asia Literacy Forum

The first Central Asia Literacy Forum, "Lifelong Literacy Development: From Early Childhood to Adult Literacy," co-convened by the ILI and MOCEF, was held in Istanbul, Turkey, 22-25 June 1999. The agenda for this conference was centred on the importance of literacy to the countries of Central Asia as they prepare to enter the 21st century and face the new challenges of globalisation and market economies, as well as educational concerns such as script and language policy reforms. Over 120 participants from 16 countries in the fields of early childhood education, basic education, literacy, and non-formal education shared their experiences and research.

Specific problems and research questions discussed included: policy perspectives in basic education and literacy, preschool literacy, early childhood education and development, innovations in adult literacy, and literacy development in Central Asia.

Both on the grounds of human rights and on pragmatic considerations, early interventions in support of the child were seen as an essential and integral part of the total basic education package. Strong advocacy of early childhood education should be conceived and implemented so as to maximise the way children benefit from basic education at the early levels of schooling and in such a way as to make child development become an important focus for rural development and poverty alleviation.

Central Asia ECCD Network Meeting

During the Central Asia Forum, MOCEF initiated a meeting to develop a Regional Network on ECCD. Sixteen representatives from various organisations, including UN Organisations, World Bank, Ministry officials and academics attended to discuss how to develop further and promote the network.

Communication and Dissemination Activities

In addition to providing ECD resources in various languages, MOCEF is also involved in the development of the following communication strategies:

- Creation of mailing list and email list: www.egroups.com/invite/earlychildhood-centralasia.org, which includes more than 350 members and sponsored by eGroups, a free, easy-to-use email group service. Its aim is to share information and exchange ideas on early childhood care and development (ECCD) matters. It will form a discussion platform between the donor community, academics, practitioners and experts on programme experiences, innovative approaches, conferences, meetings, jobs and university programme offers. There will also be space for announcements.
- Central Asia Regional ECCD Directory.
- Network Brochure (supported by Aga Khan Foundation and UNICEF) and a Regional Network Newsletter, particularly for those who do not have internet access.
- Central Asia ECCD Network Website (www.acev.org) in Turkish and English with plans to translate into Russian.

Participation at Key Meetings

- Regional meeting of The Balkan Child Rights Initiative (BCRI) whose aim it is to build a formal network among the NGOs within the Balkan Region on the issues around child rights.
- Meeting Of Central & Eastern European ECCD Forum, Budapest (October 24-28, 1999).
- UNICEF Strategy Meeting, Istanbul (November 20-27, 1999).
- EFA 2000, Dakar, Senegal (April 22-26, 2000).
- Study Tours and Workshops

MOCEF, in collaboration with UNICEF Central Asia and Kazakhstan offices, conducted a Study Tour on ECCD and Parent Education (May 2000) to introduce the family/parent education models implemented by MOCEF to regional participants of the tour.

MOCEF hosted a Regional Workshop on Development of ECCD Indicators July 3-5, 2000 in Istanbul to develop and strengthen the national capacity of ECCD indicators. Prior to the meeting a report documenting and analysing the existing situation of ECCD in Turkey was prepared using information from the Ministries of Education and Health, Statistics Institute etc.

Activities of the Partners

Bernard van Leer

Reflections on the Effectiveness Initiative's processes and first findings

An Overview of the EI Framework

For a more detailed description of the EI initiative, please refer to *Coordinators' Notebook 24* or go to: www.bvleerf.nl.

In January 1999, the Bernard van Leer Foundation and partner organisations in the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development initiated a three-year investigation known as the Effectiveness Initiative (EI). The project's intent, an-depth study of 10 selected early childhood development programmes, is to understand what makes an effective programme work and to initiate an international dialogue on effectiveness that will deepen our understanding of how to create and/or support effective programming for young children and families. The projects are located in India, Israel, the Philippines, Kenya, Mozambique, Peru, Colombia, Honduras, the Netherlands and Portugal. Data gathering activities for most sites will be completed by December 2001. While documentation and dissemination have already begun for those sites furthest along, this article will specifically focus on those activities from 2001 through to December 2004.

The Expected Outcomes

The EI is an attempt to test the application of qualitative research methods to the field of ECD, which we think will give us a better understanding of what we see, hear, feel and understand about the nature of effective programmes both in terms of processes and outcomes. What we want to arrive at is the development, articulation and dissemination of a process for assessing effectiveness in ECD, and to ensure that this process or methodology will be transferred to the next generation of ECD professionals.

What follows are the first tentative findings that those processes have helped to reveal.

Initial Findings

Due to space constraints, we are not able to print all of the initial findings. Please see www.ecdgroup.com under "Initiatives"for the full article.

EI processes are just beginning to produce a collection of lessons and reflections, and these are starting to inform team visits, international and team meetings, and preliminary reports. They are also sparking off more focused cross-site debates, and launching searches through the collected data that are beginning to highlight some initial findings. Our aim is to synthesise findings by using processes that make sense to the EI, preserving the authenticity of these findings and not reducing them to some kind of generalised 'check list' by which effectiveness can be measured. The following initial findings are offered in this light.

Impact on children Some sites are exploring the benefits that children show after a period of inclusion into ECD programmes. In Colombia, a longitudinal study of the children of PROMESA has been conducted for more than 20 years. The team is actually reviewing it in order to highlight the major findings about the impact of the programme on child development. Similarly, the Madrasa Resource Centre in Kenya has, since 1990, an on-going impact study on children, which has evolved a lot over the years. When it began, the focus was more on school performance; gradually project staff realised that they should be looking at impact with broader dimensions. One of their EI activities is to study the impact of the programme on children looking at the psycho-social development, with a focus on obtaining the children's perception on the significance of the programme on their lives. In India, SEWA's crèches were first organised to enable women to work in the tobacco industry, the direct impact was that young children were no longer exposed to the risk environment in which their mothers had to work. Gradually, the

attitude towards childcare changed, from a passive place where children were looked after while their mothers work, to a place where children were cared for and where their development is being stimulated.

Consulting children We are learning to consult children to learn about their ideas, opinions and feelings as one way of understanding a programme's effectiveness. This is a change from the traditional model of assessing impact on children only through measurement (their height, weight, school readiness, etc.). We are also learning that children's opinions and attitudes have to be assessed in the child's natural context-isolation of children in a test setting produces artificial outcomes-and that play and drama are very powerful tools to get at children's ideas.

Personal growth We are seeing that one of the greatest impacts of ECD programmes, and thus one of the outcomes of effective ECD programmes, is the personal and professional growth of those involved, particularly women and those from the community who are involved in direct service delivery. Programme workers claim that thanks to the training received and the programme itself, they benefited in terms of social prestige, self-confidence, increased knowledge and greater understanding and ability to use technical vocabulary appropriately. These benefits have very often increased their credibility in the community and led to their greater involvement in community affairs. Unfortunately this outcome of ECD programmes is not generally well-documented. We also need to learn more about how changes that are introduced by programmes affect (or not) the position of women in their families and communities.

Future focus meetings will be held to consolidate what is being learnt at the different sites, and the lessons that can be drawn across the sites. In tandem with this, innovative communication strategies are being introduced or developed for the creation of products and activities that share the EI's insights and learning with all of its audiences: the development of a publication within the "ECD: Practice and Reflection" series based on issues generated by the EI; further development of the EI section on the Foundation's website (www.bvleerf.nl); and the creation of a CD-ROM for sharing with partners and counterparts and to be used in training others in the EI approach to documentation.

At the same time, a methodology of learning is also being developed to define processes for the integration of qualitative research into ECD programming.

-Leonardo Yanez, Babeth Lefur

For more information on the Effectiveness Initiative, please visit www.bvleerf.nl

UNESCO

In the follow-up to the World Education Forum held in Dakar , April 26-28, 2000, UNESCO will focus on the following three lines of objectives and calls for inter-agency co-operation:

1. Countries will be assisted in tackling the following macro early childhood policy issues:

- how to arrange ministerial responsibilities for early childhood;
- how to set up public investment strategies;

- how to develop and improve early childhood indicators and statistics; and
- how to frame pedagogical outlines.

2. The role of the family in early childhood care and education will be clarified and tackled more systematically at the policy level. A concentrated effort will thus be made to produce and disseminate information on socio-culturally relevant and appropriate policy options to support the family in fulfilling its roles in and responsibilities for early childhood care and education.

3. There will be a more strengthened effort for advocacy among policymakers in finance and policy planning offices, early childhood professionals and parents. These three groups will be the main target groups of UNESCO's information and networking activities, carried out in collaboration with the CG and partners of the UNESCO Partnerships Programme.

For information and follow-up on the World Education Forum, please refer to website: www2.unesco.org/wef

AED: Ready to Learn

2000 Initiatives

Improving Care of Young Children in AIDS-affected Communities of Kenya. Ready to Learn received funding from the Displaced Children's and Orphans Fund at the U.S. Agency for International Development to improve the care of children under age 5 in AIDS-affected communities of Kenya. This three-year project will support families and communities to improve the physical, psychosocial, and emotional care of vulnerable young children. The project will analyse existing efforts; build models for effective support to communities caring for growing numbers of young children affected by AIDS; disseminate information; sponsor exchange visits among community-based organisations and churches; develop training modules on home and community-based care for young children affected by AIDS; and offer training for Master Trainers.

In year two, community-based model programmes and local capacity-building partnerships will be launched. Ready to Learn will assist with participatory assessment and mobilisation, programme design, community-based monitoring and evaluation, and tools and strategies for use and adaptation by interested community groups in other areas. Information analysis, dissemination and advocacy will be emphasised in year three.

For related readings, please refer to: "Assessment and improvement of care for AIDS-affected children under age five" (D. Lusk, S.L. Huffman, C. O'Gara, May, 2000). This paper presents 1) current knowledge about the care situation of AIDS-affected children under 5 years of age, 2) existing tools relevant for assessing young child care in AIDS affected settings, and 3) new assessment tools specifically designed to assess the care of AIDS-affected children under 5.

"Modified breastfeeding for HIV-positive mothers in Africa: Issues and challenges associated with the recommendation for early cessation of breastfeeding" (S. L. Huffman, D.Lusk, E.R. Zehner, C. O'Gara, E.G. Piwoz. October, 2000). Many recent recommendations to reduce mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV have suggested abrupt weaning at 3-6 months. This approach, however, has many problems that could negatively impact the lives of young children and their mothers. This paper explores the many issues associated with early and rapid cessation of breastfeeding.

Community-based Early Childhood Development in the Kyrgyz Republic. This Asian Development Bank-funded project will assist the government of the Kyrgyz Republic to design a proposal for ADB support. The broad objectives of the proposed integrated early childhood development programme are to eliminate preventable malnutrition, death, and disability; assess and optimise

the emotional and cognitive needs of children; prepare each child for life-long learning through appropriate care and interactive instruction; and increase the contributions of a highly educated labour force to future economic development. Mothers and children under eight years of age will be the focus of an integrated set of service delivery packages, with physical, mental, and emotional development-not merely survival-as the desired outcome.

Review of Early Childhood Education and Human Capital Formation in Egypt. With funding from the World Bank, Ready to Learn will support the government of Egypt to define data-based childhood education policies, strategies, and programmes; organise an international symposium on early childhood education; study the linkages between early, basic, and tertiary education and the workplace; provide a cost-benefit analysis of different approaches to early childhood education; and design pilot tests of different approaches to improving early childhood education.

Supporting Young Children's Development in Displaced Communities. Ready to Learn is exploring ways to bring early childhood development activities to mothers and children coming to supplementary feeding centres (SFCs) in southern Sudan and other displaced communities. Interested community health workers will work with community mothers and elders to develop simple programmes for feeding waiting periods involving storytelling, singing, games, and mothers discussion groups. A training module supporting community health workers to give parents information and ideas about basic child development activities and one to support parents in organising cooperative child care will also be offered.

For more information on other activities and publications and on Ready to Learn, please visit our website at www.aed.org/readytolearn or contact Chloe O'Gara or Sarah K. Dastur at 202-884-8261.

ECCD Resources

UWI ECECD Resource Centre, Caribbean ECCD Resources

A print and electronic resource centre on campus for early childhood students and students of the Caribbean child and family generally, and as public education resource. Germinal website developed by World Bank will kickstart regional electronic links that will expand with regional inputs.

Caribbean Link for ECECD/Caribbean Network News Bulletin

The first meeting of Caribbean Link for ECECD was convened by the CCDC on the University of the West Indies distance education system. The first issue of the Caribbean Network News Bulletin is now available by post, email or fax. For more information, email: ccdc@cwjamaica.com. Also, the newly developed Caribbean Early Childhood website is up and running: www.jbte.edu.jm:1104/caribweb.

Other Publications/Videos

HIV, Health, and Your Community: a guide for action

Reuben Granich, MD, MPH and Jonathan Mermin, MD, MPH and published by Stanford University Press and Cambridge University.

A comprehensive, easy-to-understand guide for people working with HIV and AIDS throughout the world. It would be equally useful in a rural village in southern Africa, a major city in Thailand or the United States, or a Peace Corps Volunteer's backpack. It is designed as a manual for people confronting the HIV epidemic in their communities, and is easily accessible to those without medical or technical knowledge and without prior training in the prevention of HIV or the care of those with AIDS. Topics range from the biology of the virus to designing prevention programmes, from the epidemiology of the disease to writing grant proposals. Your feedback on the book and ideas for distribution would be welcome.

Available for USD $14.95. Non-profit organisations ordering in bulk will be offered a 40% discount. All of the all of the author's proceeds will be donated to non-profit AIDS organisations. For more information, see: www.hivbook.org and contact: Reuben Granich or Jonathan Mermin c/o Stanford University Press Stanford, California, 94305-2235 USA. Reuben Granich can be reached via email at rgranich@dhs.ca.gov Jonathan Mermin can be reached via email at Jhm7@CDC.gov.

Launch of UNICEF's The State of the World's Children 2001, December 12, 2000

What happens during the very earliest years of a child's life, from birth to age three, influences how the rest of childhood and adolescence unfolds. Yet, this critical time is usually neglected in the policies, programmes, and budgets of countries. The State of the World's Children 2001 highlights the first of the Special Session' s goals-the best possible start in life for every child, without exception.

By drawing on international reports, The State of the World's Children 2001 focuses on the early childhood years and chronicles the daily lives of parents and other caregivers who are striving-in the face of war, poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic-to protect the rights and meet the needs of these young children. Country profiles, maps, and statistical data for 193 countries are also presented. French and Spanish versions are also available. Cost is $USD 12.95.

To order a copy of the publication and/or video, please contact United Nations Publications:

Tel: 212-963-8302; 800-253-9646 (USA and Canada only); Fax: 212-963-3489

www.un.org/Pubs/unicef/orderfrm.htm

Weekly Bulletin

Asociación Mundial de Educadores Infantiles World Association of Early Childhood Educators

The weekly Bulletin of AMEI-WAECE is distributed fee of charge in English and Spanish to provide information on news and developments in the field of early childhood education.

Requests for exchanges of experiences are published in the original language in which they are received.

Email: info@waece.com Internet: http://www.waece.com/

Bringing up children in a changing world: Who's right? Whose rights?

C. Arnold, S. Bartlett, J. Hill, C. Khatiwada, P. Sapkota. Save the Children/Unicef: 2000.

A joint initiative of the Save the Children Alliance, UNICEF, Seto Gurans National Child Development Services, City University of New York's Children's Environments Research Group and Tribhuvan University's Centre for Education and Research in Development.

"Who's right? Whose rights?" qualitatively examines the childrearing beliefs and practices of families in four rural villages in Nepal. Using approaches based on participatory learning and action (PLA), ethnographic interviews and observation, and including a child rights framework, the study considers the hopes and expectations of families for their children, as well as their concerns, frustrations, and very real constraints. It also considers the larger context of family and village life, including social and economic realities, gender and caste issues, as well as culture and the process of change. A major goal of the study was to develop methods to facilitate collaborative dialogue around key issues for children as the basis for joint planning. Further follow-up will include the development of a toolkit highlighting the methods used in the study for use in parenting programmes and other ECD initiatives.

To order, e-mail kroka@savechildren-norway.org.np and cc rbal@savechildren.org.np.

Meetings

2nd International Conference on Children's Rights in Education

University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

August 18-22, 2001

The 2nd International Conference on Children's Rights in Education will be conducted 18-22 August at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, under the auspices of the Institute for Child Rights and Development (ICRD), Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria and Child Rights Education International. Education International, the International School Psychology Association, and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child are among the cooperating international organisations for the Conference.

This Conference's purpose is to build upon the success of the 1st International Conference on Children's Rights in Education (Copenhagen, April 1998) in advancing respect and support for children's rights and the full development of children through education.

For more information, please visit: www.childrightseducation.org or contact, Natasha Blanchet-Cohen: tel: (1-250) 472-4762 or email: indcrc@uvic.ca.

The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children

New York

September 19-21, 2001

The Special Session on Children is an unprecedented meeting of the UN General Assembly dedicated to the children and adolescents of the world. It will bring together government leaders and Heads of State, NGOs, children's advocates and young people themselves from 19-21 September, 2001 at the United Nations in New York City. The gathering will present a great opportunity to change the way the world views and treats children. The CGEECD and a number of its regional partners and other members are among the NGOs and advocates involved in the preparations and discussion for this special session, which will review the progress made for children in the decade since the 1990 World Summit for Children and the World Declaration and Plan of Action. UNICEF is serving as Secretariat for the Special Session on Children, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee. Two substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee (with a third to be held in June 2001) have been organised to date.

Three key areas provide the framework for discussions and consideration:

- The best possible start in life for all children.
- A good-quality basic education for all children.

- The opportunities for all children, especially adolescents, for meaningful participation in their communities.

A draft provisional outcome document, "A World Fit for Children," drafted by the Bureau of UNGASS, was presented at the second preparatory meeting. It is an action plan for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, its explicit aim being to provide a catalyst for major progress for children. This document defined "The Best Possible Start in Life" primarily in health terms; attention to development was very weak.

An alternative NGO text has been prepared by the Child Rights Caucus recommending changes to the draft outcome document, in particular requesting that the final outcome document must present more specific goals, actions, and issues not addressed by the current text.

The CGECCD has recommended that the alternative text (and ultimately the final document) include goals that would strengthen the position of early childhood care and development with regards to young children and their families, caregivers and communities, re-emphasising that learning begins at birth, that learning is not only synonymous with education and schooling, and that the earliest years of life are critical to providing the foundation for lifelong learning and active and productive participation in society. Specifically, we are requesting that the document includes goals which would improve access to quality early child and family programmes aimed at promoting the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of children aged 0-6 years, particularly for the disadvantaged and those with special needs; see an improvement in the development of children measured at ages 3 and 5 years according to national standards; and assure that all young people, parents; and caregivers have acquired the knowledge deemed appropriate to support the care and education of children in their earliest years.

For more information on the Special Session, please go to UNICEF at: www.unicef.org or the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN): www.crin.org

Beginning in April 2001, the Global Movement for Children, a collection of people and organisations around the world dedicated to promoting the rights of the child and changing the world with children will be asking the world to "Say Yes For Children." Through this campaign, children and adults from around the world will be able to speak out on ten imperative actions which must be undertaken in order to improve the lives of children. The results of the campaign will be presented in September 2001 at the Special Session on Children. The Movement will then take the message of the Special Session to the world, and hold leaders accountable for the agreements they have made.

Individuals and organisations can participate in two different ways:

- By logging onto www.globalmovementforchildren.org or www.netaid.org people from around the world will be able to fill out the ballot in seven different languages and post and read messages. On the site, updated vote counts and some demographic information about who is voting will also be available. Organisations will also be able to request reports showing the level of participation they have generated and view various results for their country of origin.
- Organisations or individuals can further support the effort by disseminating ballots to those without Internet access. They can log on and receive a printable ballot and an interviewer's guide in the appropriate language.

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EFF-089 (1/2003)

PS031038